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THE EYE



THE INDEPENDENT

Newspaper of the Year for photographs

Friday 27 February 1998 45p No 3,545

Defence cuts to help human rights

Military training budget reduced by more than £2m to finance Robin Cook's ethical foreign policy initiative

Exclusive

By Andrew Marshall

ROBIN COOK, the Foreign Secretary, will today launch a new Human Rights Project Fund, cutting back on military training programmes to pay for it.

The initiative puts flesh on the bones of Mr Cook's controversial commitment to an ethical foreign policy. It is the first time that dedi-

cated funds have been set aside for human rights around the world by the Foreign Office.

The Foreign Office has carried out a large-scale review of human rights activities since Mr Cook arrived in office, and has been quietly rethinking its policies. The Conservatives were often criticised for putting business higher than ethics in their list of priorities.

The new fund, £5m for 1998/99, will supplement existing small-scale local human rights projects run from

British embassies. Of the total, £2.25m will be drawn from the existing budget for military training, sending out a clear signal of the Government's intention to change the ways of the past. Visits by ministers to countries such as Colombia, Indonesia and Brazil have already led to a reassessment of the way that embassies liaise with human rights groups. In Indonesia, Mr Cook also offered new legal and police training courses as part of an effort to curb human rights abuses in the country.

But the new initiative goes a step further than this, creating a new (albeit small) fund that is aimed at improving the protection of human rights globally. The aid will be directed at both governments and non-governmental organisations, such as community groups and human rights associations. Where there is overseas government opposition to human rights programmes, the Government will still give money to NGOs. Priority targets are likely to include legal training, support for

a free media and tackling child abuse.

To get better value for money, the new fund will work with other existing programmes – such as those run by the Department for International Development, the British Council and the Chevening scholarships.

Military training, previously an important part of Britain's attempt to secure overseas influence, will also be re-targeted as part of the shift towards a more ethical foreign policy. The UK Military Training Assis-

tance Scheme (UKMTAS) will be renamed ASSIST (Assistance to Support Stability with In-Service Training) giving a more cuddly sound.

But there will also be a more substantive change. The objectives behind military training will be reshaped to focus more directly on human rights. Top of the list of priorities will be the promotion of respect for civilian democratic government and practices amongst overseas military and police forces. Previously, the programme focused

more on supporting "stability" – which often cloaked repression.

The new policy is likely to mean an end to purely technical military and police training, which has attracted criticism from human rights groups. Britain will continue to teach things like peacekeeping skills, however.

Mr Cook's ethical foreign policy attracted some criticism from those who thought it did not go far enough. The Foreign Office has quietly been developing ideas about putting its principles into practice.

Jockey and trainers win libel fight

By Greg Wood
Racing Correspondent

KIEREN FALLON, the champion Flat jockey, and leading racehorse trainers Lynda Ramsden and her husband, Jack, yesterday won their 19-day libel action against the *Sporting Life*, which had accused them of "cheating".

A jury at the High Court awarded damages of £70,000 to Mr Fallon, £75,000 to Mrs Ramsden and £50,000 to Mr Ramsden. With costs, the estimated bill for the *Sporting Life* is expected to reach almost £700,000.

The plaintiffs had sued over an article on 11 May 1995, the day after Top Cees, trained by Mrs Ramsden and ridden by Mr Fallon, had won the Chester Cup. In a comment column under the headline "Contempt For The Punter" written by Alastair Down, the newspaper's associate editor, it was alleged that the Ramsdens and Mr Fallon had been "cheating" when the same horse finished fifth in a race at Newmarket three weeks earlier.

Yesterday, the jury decided that the words complained of were neither substantially true nor fair comment.

During the trial, Derek Thompson, a Channel 4 racing presenter, told the court of a conversation in which Mr Fallon had admitted "pulling" Top Cees at Newmarket. Mr Fallon described Mr Thompson's story as a "lie" when he returned to the witness stand.

Tom Clarke, editor of the *Sporting Life*, said: "The case was fought on a matter of principle by the *Sporting Life* in its capacity as a guardian of the punters' interests. We think it is a sad day for racing but do not regret defending this action for one moment."

Sport, page 30

Countryside in flames: protest beacons from Land's End to John o'Groats



Devon hill farmer Maurice Retallick, on Hay Tor, Dartmoor, lights one of last night's Countryside Rally protest beacons. Photograph: Tim Cuff/Apex

Rural march 'hijacked by dark forces'

By Ian Burrow

THE Countryside March on London this weekend has been "hijacked" by the Conservative Party and rich businessmen for political ends, a leading country sports campaigner claimed.

Michael Yardley, national spokesman for the Sportsmen's Association, which represents 40,000 shooting sports enthusiasts, said that "dark forces"

It also emerged that the Ministry of Defence has given VIP tours of RAF Leeming in North Yorkshire as prizes to raise funds for the countryside campaign. The MoD said it was designed to improve relations with the local community and had "no political overtones whatsoever".

Sport, page 30

The Sportsmen's Association is providing stewards for the weekend march which is expected to attract up to 250,000 to London in a protest against the threat to traditional country life.

But Mr Yardley said most would have "no idea" of the politics behind the scenes. He believes his organisation has been marginalised by those supporting the interests of fox-hunters and landowners. "I think there are some very powerful business and landowning interests who are taking over the political control of it," he said. "The Conservative Party is jumping on to this bandwagon."

The Tory party leader, William Hague, will attend Sunday's march in a personal capacity and the Tories recently launched a Countryside Campaign to protect the green belt. By contrast, the

Government is only sending junior agriculture ministers.

Major landowners giving fund-raising support to the march include Minister Michael Heseltine, the former deputy prime minister, who offered a tour of the arboretum at his country home as a £450 prize in a fundraiser organised by the local hunt. He also paid £500 to the march fund for the prize of a gardening consultancy.

Mr Yardley claimed his association had established the popular movement for country rights when it held a succession of marches in London a year ago in protest at legislation to ban handgunning.

Then in July, the newly formed Countryside Alliance organised the Countryside Rally, which was supported by the Sportsmen's Association and attracted

120,000 people. In September, the Sportsmen's Association staged another London march, which Mr Yardley claimed was undermined by powerful interests.

He received several telephone calls, including one from a "senior figure in the Conservative Party", warning him to cancel the march. The Conservative Party has denied hijacking the campaign and said the event was run by an "independent organisation and we don't give them any support".

Janet George, of the Countryside Alliance, which organised the march, said: "There are one or two organisations who should try to stick to the spirit of the march and not try to make political points."

In The News, page 3; David Aaronovitch, page 21

Panic stations over threat from computer Millennium Bug

By Anthony Bevins and Michael Harrison

THE PANIC button was pushed by the European Commission yesterday, with a stark warning that too little was being done to avert an international "Millennium Bug" computer crisis costing £750bn and threatening lives and business.

"The overall level of actual preparation appears to be insufficient, in spite of the sub-

stantial risk of disruption to businesses as well as public services," the Commission said.

Urging accelerated action, it underlined the mounting sense of impending crisis with a bald description of the hazards ahead for individuals. "As far as the potential impact on consumers is concerned," examples include damage to personal and financial records, the miscalculation of transactions impacting sav-

ings, bank accounts, mortgages, errors in invoicing from utilities, errors on payrolls and salary payments. Safety is also at stake: the failure of a computer application in a aircraft, a traffic control system, a power station, or an intensive care unit can put human lives at risk."

The threat is posed by the fact that many computers are programmed to interpret the two-digit year as 1900, rather than 2000, and it has been es-

timated that it could cost as much as £750bn to correct software across the world.

Tony Blair has already taken a lead in raising awareness of the problem: setting up a special Cabinet Committee to review contingency planning for basic services such as water, gas, electricity, and transport, and getting President Bill Clinton to agree it as an agenda item for the summit of Group of Eight leading industrialised countries,

to be held in Birmingham next May. Yesterday he sanctioned a ten-fold increase in the funds being committed to tackle the Millennium Bug. The budget for the campaign will rise from £1m last year to close on £10m this year.

Meanwhile the Financial Services Authority, the new watchdog for the City, intends to require firms to be millennium compliant as a condition of gaining a licence to operate.

The move is especially aimed at the thousands of independent financial advisers who sell everything from pensions and life policies to mortgages.

Gridlock threat, page 10

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£10 buys a chain cutter

He's chained up through his sensitive nose and made to walk on red hot plates, whilst the back of his legs are hit in time to music. Onlookers taunt him and force him to drink beer. Why? Because they're teaching him to 'dance' for tourists who pay to watch his agonising waltz.

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WSPA
World Society for the Protection of Animals

Cook's wife
seeks divorceFraud
arrestsEasyJet acts
against BA£800m owed
to councils

Vietnam battler who is unlikely defender of rural life

HE CLAIMS to have been inspired by the anti-Vietnam protests and the civil rights movement in America. Eric Bettelheim, wealthy Chicago-born City lawyer, is an unlikely defender of British rural life.

Yet he is the man who thought up Sunday's vast exodus of country into town.

If the Government cannot be swayed by the strength of rural opinion, he believes that "direct action" might become the only option in combating "the organs of state violence" as they attack traditions.

The Countryside March, he has said, came to him in a thought over lunch when an image came to mind of the Jarrow Crusade, the great procession against poverty by the unemployed from the North-east who walked to London in 1936.

"We should get people marching from all parts of the country to demonstrate how they feel," he told his companion.

But in his frock and pin-stripes, working from a legal office in the shadow of St Paul's Cathedral, he looks anything but an opponent of the establishment. A stag's head on the wall gives a pointer to his great love away from the world of financial services law.

On "occasional" weekends he dons the pink coat to go hunting. He likes other country sports too. "People say I am a pretty good shot."

The son of Bruno, the famous child psychologist, he was introduced to the joys of the great American doors learning to shoot and canoe at summer camp. Mr Bettelheim came to Britain to study at law at Oriel College, Oxford.

A defining moment in his life was a trip to Dalnacardoch in Scotland, where he was first introduced to the finer points of walked-up grouse shooting. But as he committed himself further to British country pursuits he quickly realised that his new

IN THE NEWS ERIC BETTELHEIM

interests faced an uncertain future.

While his freedom-fighting zeal may have been inspired by the Sixties counterculture – he was "involved" in the civil rights movement – he emphasises that it was Enoch Powell whose words set him on his current course.

During a speech at the Inner Temple in 1992, Mr Powell expressed the view that field sports were a civil liberty under threat unless public opinion could be turned.

Mr Bettelheim's answer was the Countryside Business Group, which aimed to raise millions to give a louder voice to the hunting, shooting and fishing set.

Drawing on his considerable networking skills, Mr Bettelheim was able to sign up 10 founding members of the group, each prepared to pay up £10,000.

But it was always Mr Bettelheim's intention to mould the scores of field sports organisations into a "powerful, single-group lobby", which has emerged in the form of the Countryside Alliance, which is organising Sunday's march.

Meanwhile, he continues with his own crusade, giving more than 200 public presentations on the value of field sports.

He believes that part of the problem is the general public's reluctance to face up to death. Hunting, he says, brings people in touch with death. "As my father was one of the many great minds to point out, without death life has no meaning."

Leading article, page 20

Ian Burrell



Eric Bettelheim: Direct action

Photograph: League Against Cruel Sports

THE SAYINGS OF ERIC BETTELHEIM

"IF YOU can sell death in packages called cigarettes, you can sell field sports."

"I grew up during the Vietnam protests and the civil rights movement, and I saw they had to defend themselves like a minority in the modern political and media terms."

"The communists went into rural communities and tore them to shreds! What is the difference between what is happening in English farms and collectivisation?"

"In my opinion this will be the biggest voluntary movement of people in this country since D-Day."

THE FRIENDS OF ERIC BETTELHEIM

LORD STEEL of Alkwood, chairman of the Countryside Movement; the Duke of Westminster, Britain's richest man who underwrote the Countryside Movement; Sir Alick Rankin, chairman of General Accident and director designate of the new Countryside Alliance; Jonny Weatherby, chairman of the family firm which runs British racing. The Countryside Alliance, which is organising Sunday's march is an amalgamation of the Countryside Movement, the Countryside Business Group and the 80,000-strong British Field Sports Society.

THE ENEMIES OF ERIC BETTELHEIM

ACTOR SIR JOHN GIELGUD, children's presenter Michaela Strachan (above right), singer Mark Owen, anthropologist

Desmond Morris, actor and playwright Colin Welland, television presenter Shaw Taylor, all are supporters of the Campaign



for the Protection of Hunted Animals, which backs Michael Foster MP's bill to ban hunting with hounds.

WHERE HE LIVES

MR BETTELHEIM lives in Knightsbridge, and works for American law firm Mayer, Brown and Platt in a ninth floor office near St Paul's amid the grey towers of banks and financial institutions with barely a tree in sight.

BRUNO, THE FATHER

Renowned child psychologist who survived Auschwitz and Dachau to emerge as an American sage and cultural hero. Ran the Orthogenic School in Chicago where he developed humane treatments for severely disturbed children. His writings include *The Uses of Enchantment*, a work on the psychological function of fairy tales which has become a classic. He also authored *The Good Enough Parent* while disinheriting his own daughter.

Former yacht commodore celebrated birthday by strangling mother-of-two with a length of rope

Yachtsman gets life for killing wife and faking suicide

By Louise Jury

WHEN mother-of-two Tina Longworth disappeared under water as she overturned her sailing dinghy, her husband Paul was unmoved. "The only trouble is she's coming up," he said.

Three weeks later, the yachting commodore celebrated his 37th birthday by strangling her, then attempting to fake her suicide.

The truth began to unravel when police noticed strange scratches and bruises on her body. Yesterday, despite repeated denials, Paul Longworth, 38, received a life sentence for her murder.

In a month-long trial at Liverpool Crown Court, the jury was told of the Longworths' turbulent marriage through the gossipy conversations of the Southport Sailing Club in Merseyside which was their social life. After seven years together, the marriage had run

into difficulties. Longworth admitted to a friend, Dave Smith, that he had hit his wife and on another occasion, Mrs Longworth accused her husband of raping her.

As the marriage deteriorated, she began an affair with local firefighter Gary Silcock. "She met me for the same reason I met her – things were not right at home," Mr Silcock told the court. "She didn't want to leave Paul. She didn't want to hurt him and she couldn't leave her children."

That decision led to her death. Detective Inspector Bob Morrison, who investigated the murder, said he believed the couple had an argument on the morning of Paul Longworth's birthday.

"He admitted he had ripped up a birthday card in front of his wife in the morning," the inspector said outside court.

"He went to work and when he came back the argument continued." The killing itself was

less a crime of passion than of temper, he said. "He is a ruthless and possessive man."

What apparently happened was this: Longworth strangled his wife on the evening of 8 January last year. He strung her body from the banisters of their home with a piece of sailing rope as their children, Abby, seven, and Matthew, five, slept nearby. And he went for a birthday drink at the sailing club for an alibi. On his return, he dialled 999 sounding distraught and desperate and woke neighbours to demand their help.

As a neighbour who was a nurse searched for Mrs Longworth's pulse, he sat on her head and cradled her head, stroking her hair.

Despite the absence of a note, police at first thought at first they were dealing with a suicide. Mrs Longworth had previously received treatment for a phobia about cancer and her husband claimed she was depressed. But the seeds of doubt

were sown when police became suspicious of the number of marks on her body. A post-mortem examination revealed 36 separate injuries. The tone of her diary and letters to her grandfather were at odds with an interpretation of depression and medical evidence suggested she had made a complete recovery from her illness.

Longworth, who worked in an opticians, had at first pretended their marriage was perfectly normal. When he was re-interviewed in the light of the suspicions, he admitted he and his wife had had a turbulent year. But he denied murder to the very end.

After the case yesterday, Detective Inspector Morrison said he believed the verdict was the right one. "Paul Longworth has been described as a ruthless and callous individual. The murderer committed and his actions since have proved that description to be true."

"Although I am obviously pleased with the result, the reality of today is that two young children have, in effect, lost their father as well as their mother."

He was surprised, he added, that the dead woman's family had supported Longworth throughout the trial. But that was testimony indeed to how plausible the killer's lies had been.

New sacking drama at Opera House

By David Lister
Arts News Editor

THE DRAMAS at the Royal Opera House resumed yesterday as two of its key management figures were sacked.

Keith Cooper, the director of sales and broadcasting, who became something of a cult figure in the BBC fly on the wall documentary *The House*, was told to leave, as was director of finance Richard Hall.

Ironically, Mr Cooper emerged in the BBC series as an aesthetic hatchet man, sacking staff or hinting darkly that they were not "intelligent enough" for the job. With his studied good looks, designer suits and merciful changes of mood, he began to receive fan mail. *Arts Management Weekly* magazine reported that, for women of the chattering classes, Mr Cooper had replaced the surly Mr Darcey of *Pride and Prejudice* as the man they most wanted to reform.

Now he himself has been sacked. He was in charge of marketing the Royal Ballet season in Hammersmith for which tickets sold very badly. Mr Hall carries less responsibility, as he has been there less than a year.

The sackings have been authorised by the new ROH chairman Sir Colin Southgate who was brought in by Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, from EMI, and by chief executive Mary Allen.

The ROH's pre-Southgate management was roundly criticised by the House of Commons Culture Select Committee. But the harshest criticism was reserved for Mary Allen. Speculation was mounting last night over whether she would keep her job. How quickly she manages to build up a relationship with Sir Colin will be crucial.

The removal of Messrs Cooper and Hall and the resignation of the former chairman, Lord Chaddington, and the entire board mean that the select committee's strictures and persistent criticism in the press have led to a near-complete turnover of senior management. Rarely, if ever, in cultural life has public criticism been so swiftly followed by so many managerial changes.

In its report published last December, the select committee expressed disbelief that the opera house, which handled £98m over the past five years, did not even produce monthly balance sheets. And it attacked management for not finding alternative accommodation during the house's present closure for a £214m redevelopment programme.

Pelham Allen, who is on secondment to the opera house from chartered accountants Coopers and Lybrand, will now take over as finance director. The sales operation will be headed by director of external relations, Judy Grahame.



GUILTY AS CHARGED: Paul Longworth, and the sailing club that he visited after strangling his wife

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Publisher pledges not to censor Patten book

By Andrew Bancombe and Paul McCann

CHRIS Patten's memoirs, believed to be scathing in its criticism of the Chinese authorities, will be published in its entirety, his new publisher vowed last night.

Macmillan will formally announce today that it is to publish *East and West*, after Mr Patten switched from his pre-

vious publishers HarperCollins to avoid censorship from Rupert Murdoch.

Last night Macmillan's managing director, Ian Chapman, said that he knew Mr Patten was adamant his memoirs would not be censored. "That is the basis on which we have taken the book and we are delighted to have done so," he said.

Meanwhile, there was growing speculation that Mr Patten,

whose time as Governor of Hong Kong brought him into conflict with Peking, may be considering legal action against Mr Murdoch, possibly over a breach of contract.

All he would say last night was: "People have only been told half the story so far." He earlier said: "I am adamant my book will be read the way I intended it to be read."

The dispute between Mr

Patten and Mr Murdoch, whose business interests in the Far East including the Star TV satellite station have long led him to placate the Chinese, emerged after the *East and West* editor at HarperCollins resigned after apparently being told to cut out the anti-Chinese comments.

The *Independent* revealed yesterday that Stuart Proffitt, highly regarded in the publishing world, left after refusing the

demands of senior executives to rewrite, or else have Mr Patten rewrite, those sections. It is understood those demands came in turn from Mr Murdoch.

Mr Proffitt was yesterday unavailable for comment. It is understood he is staying away from London at his remote farmhouse in the Black Mountains in the Welsh border. It is believed he will be taking HarperCollins to an industrial

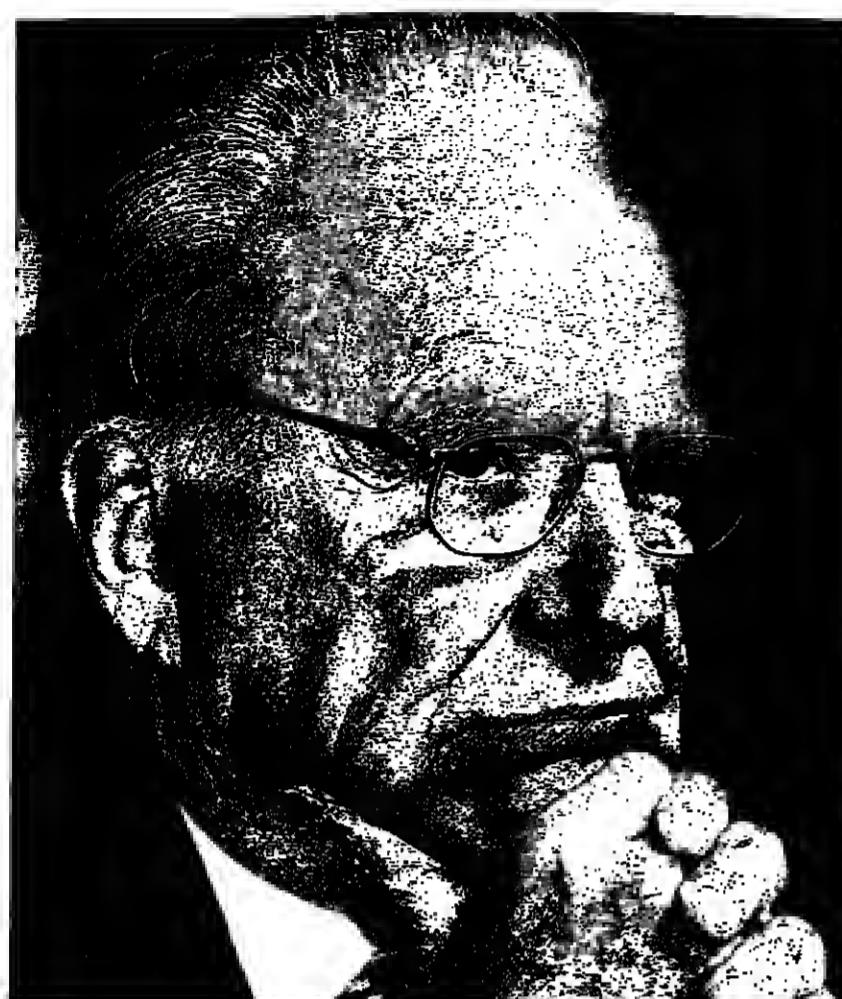
tribunal following a breakdown in negotiations between the company and his lawyers.

Colleagues at HarperCollins in London knew Mr Proffitt had been suspended two weeks ago. They were informed of his departure on Wednesday by an internal memo. HarperCollins yesterday again declined to comment. The company said its chairman, Edward Bell, was not due back until later today.

The loss of Mr Patten's book will be a major blow to the company. Macmillan considers obtaining his memoirs a major coup. "It is a major project and a very important book," said Mr Chapman. "The book will be a big promotion before it is published, sometime in the autumn."

Mr Patten's departure from HarperCollins could also affect the future of other authors concerned about possible editorial interference. John Major's office declined to comment on the effect Mr Proffitt's departure would have on his plans to publish his memoirs through the imprint, but Michael Dobbs hinted that he was considering his position: "I would prefer to find out the facts first," he said.

Lord Archer described his relationship with Mr Proffitt as "very close", but maintained that he would be staying put.



Rupert Murdoch: Numerous promises of non-interference

Murdoch interferes around the world

By Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

IT HAS passed into Fleet Street legend that on his first night as owner of the *Times*, Rupert Murdoch was being shown around the building when he came across the reading desk where proofs of the next day's newspaper were piled up. After reading the leader which related to his own acquisition of the paper – and listed the holdings of other newspaper groups – he took a pen from his pocket and inserted the words "The Star" into the Express Group's list.

This tiny act took place just hours after he had promised that he would not interfere with the editorial content of the newspaper and was a sign of things to come.

"The most charitable explanation of Mr Murdoch's attitude to a promise was that he meant it when he made it," wrote former *Times* editor Harold Evans in his memoir *Good Times Bad Times*. And given all the promises of non-interference that Mr Murdoch has made in his career it is incredible that anyone ever believed him.

Even those such as former *Sunday Times* editor Andrew Neil who are credited with making his empire millions never become important enough to avoid interference. In 1994

the *Sunday Times* spent months investigating and harassing the government of Malaysia over payments made in aid by Britain to get building contracts for the Pergau Dam.

These stories ran with other tales of corruption from Malaysia which irritated the country's Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. This irritation was passed on to Mr Murdoch, who needed Malaysia's permission for the expansion of his Asian satellite television station Star TV. Mr Neil left Mr Murdoch's employ with a £1m payoff and Star could broadcast in Malaysia.

So it is hard to see how Mr Patten could be surprised by Mr Murdoch's willingness to sacrifice editorial integrity to the needs of Star TV. In 1994 he dropped the BBC from Star's Chinese broadcasts at the behest of the Communist leadership.

And HarperCollins' author list is not immune. Not for nothing have the daughter of Deng Xiaoping and Republican senator Newt Gingrich received fat advances.

The importance of Star to Mr Murdoch's empire was underlined when he forecast in a biography that "in 10, maybe 15 years I hope it will be a bonanza". That bonanza has presumably helped him forget that he also once said satellite television was "an unambiguous threat to totalitarian regimes everywhere."



Chris Patten: Insistent on authorial freedom for his book *East and West*

Train driver ignored signals that were set at caution

THE driver of a train that crashed, killing a woman passenger, ignored signals to slow down and speeded up seconds before the impact, a court heard yesterday.

Peter Afford was driving the four-coach train from London

Euston to Milton Keynes when it hit an empty passenger train travelling in the opposite direction at Watford Junction, Hertfordshire in August 1996, killing one passenger and injuring more than 70 others. Mr Afford, 56, of Normansfield

Close, Bushey, Herts, has pleaded not guilty to manslaughter relating to the death of Ruth Snook; better known as Ruth Holland, 54, from Hemel Hempstead. Brian Escort-Cox QC, prosecuting at Luton crown court, claimed Mr Afford dis-

regarded yellow signals and Advanced Warning System lights and buzzers in his cab telling him to slow down in preparation for a red signal to stop.

"Had Mr Afford obeyed those signals, you and I would not be here today," Mr Escort-

Cox told the jury. "If Mr Afford had been obeying the yellow signal he could have pulled up in comfort but he was actually accelerating."

Mr Escort-Cox said that Mr Afford had just started his shift and was driving his first train of

the day, which left at about 5pm, on a line that he knew well.

He claimed the driver was accelerating through a yellow light. Although he reacted quickly and braked when he saw the red signal, Mr Escort-Cox said, "The die was already cast."

He was going too fast. Putting his brakes too late."

Mr Afford's train was required to stop as an empty eight-carriage train, heading for Euston, was crossing in front of it. Mr Escort-Cox completed his opening speech for the prosecu-

tion by showing the jury a series of photographs of the crash aftermath.

He also showed a video, taken from the driver's cab of a train, travelling along the same line from Harrow to the collision spot at Watford junction.

The case continues today.

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DIRECT LINE	9.2%	£585.51	£183,751	

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- Since January '97 interest payments have risen and risen and risen. With one phone call to Direct Line you can start to bring them down again.
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Doctors warn of a new child vaccine risk

By Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

DOCTORS have discovered a new childhood disease which could be linked with a vaccine given to 600,000 children a year.

The disease, marked by an unusual inflammation of the gut, is associated with autism and could provide a clue to the origins of the devastating disorder which results in social withdrawal and difficulties in communication.

Researchers at the Royal Free Hospital, London, who have studied 12 children with the syndrome say that in eight the symptoms appeared soon after vaccination with MMR which is given at age 12 to 15 months to protect against measles, mumps and rubella. They claim to be the first in the world to identify the syndrome which they say has emerged since the start of the MMR vaccination programme in 1988.

However, at a press conference called by the hospital yesterday to publicise the findings, published in the *Lancet*, doctors were divided about the implications. Most of those involved in the study say MMR vaccination should continue but Dr Andrew Wakefield, leader of the team, said it should be divided into its three component parts and given separately.

The hypothesis is that the combined vaccine delivers a jolt to the child's developing immune system which could be reduced if it were divided. Dr Wakefield said: "Vaccination should continue, but it will put children at no further risk if it is dissociated into three."

A commentary in the journal, which is sceptical about the study, says the link with MMR has not been proved and warns of a "social tragedy" if the public shun immunisation. The first symptoms of autism commonly appear in the second year of life, about the time MMR is given, leading to the possibility of a false association. Before immunisation against measles was introduced, the disease killed around 90 children a year.

Dr Simon Murch, paediatrician and co-author of the paper said there was insufficient evidence to justify a switch to single vaccines. "The link is un-



Changed person: Matthew Poulter with his mother Rochelle, who is convinced that MMR vaccine caused her son's autism

Photograph: Andrew Hasson

proven and measles is a killing infection. If this precipitates a scare and immunisation rates go down then, as night follows day, measles will return and children will die."

Dr Wakefield, reader in experimental gastro-enterology, said he had studied a further 48 children, 46 of whom had the syndrome, and had 700 referrals awaiting investigation.

An earlier study by the team had suggested that the measles virus was implicated in Crohn's disease and that the rise in cases of that disease could be linked with measles vaccination. However, other investigators have failed to replicate the findings, according to the *Lancet*.

Dr Wakefield said: "After that study appeared I received a

number of calls from parents whose children had lost acquired skills and speech shortly after MMR vaccination. They also had bowel problems. They all told precisely the same story. I thought I should investigate."

Tests revealed they all had the same, previously unseen, gut disorder which the researchers have called ileal-lymphoid-nodular hyperplasia, which is similar to Crohn's.

Professor Aric Zuckerman, dean of the Royal Free Medical School, said hundreds of millions of people around the globe had taken measles and MMR vaccines without damage. "I think caution is essential. Until robust virological evidence is available [to implicate MMR] this remains a hypothesis."

Dr Aric Zuckerman, a gastro-enterologist who has conducted research in the field for a decade, is driven by the belief that casualties of the vaccination programme must be recognised and supported.

He said yesterday: "It is a moral issue with me. If there are children who are damaged by these preventive measures they have to be listened to, investigated and treated. I know it makes it difficult for the public health doctors [promoting

vaccination] but there is nothing to be done about it."

Professor Aric Zuckerman, dean of the Royal Free and a virologist, who chaired yesterday's press conference but was not a member of the research team, takes the opposite view and upbraids his colleagues for failing to emphasise the dangers of measles and the protective benefits of vaccination. "Hundreds of millions of doses of these vaccines have been given worldwide, both separately and in combination, and they have been shown to be safe," he said.

The work of the Royal Free team remains controversial within the scientific community. Their 1994 study linking measles infection with Crohn's disease, also published in the *Lancet*, was criticised in a review of research in the *British Medi-*

cal Journal in January which declared the hypothesis dead.

When the latest paper was received by the *Lancet* last August it was sent to four experts for peer review, and was discussed by the editorial committee on three occasions.

Critics said it should not be published because it was based on a small sample of patients attracted to a hospital department known to have an interest in their condition.

The Department of Health said last night that there would be no alteration to the vaccination programme. The Committee on Safety of Medicines and the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation had kept in close touch with the work at the Royal Free and neither had advised any change.

— Jeremy Laurance

Dobson issues blood plasma warning to protect patients



Frank Dobson: Precautions

VACCINE makers were urged yesterday to avoid using UK blood products to protect patients from the "theoretical risk" of contracting the human form of mad-cow disease from contaminated blood products.

Frank Dobson, Secretary of State for Health, said the new measures were "precautionary" and insisted there was no evidence that new-variant CJD could be spread through blood.

The move was announced after advice from the UK Committee on Safety of Medicines, which has advised the Government to import plasma, the fluid in which 33 licensed blood products are derived. Mr Dobson stressed that the measures recommended by the committee are only precautionary and do not mean that UK blood and blood products are unsafe.

The plasma is derived from between 20,000 and 66,000 donations and the Government

will also be extending blood product recalls to include donors being strongly "suspected" of having new variant CJD and not just recalls based on confirmed cases only.

He said: "We have no evidence to show that new variant CJD can be transmitted via blood products or blood — the risk remains only hypothetical.

From MMR to autism

Case study

ROBERT MILES was one of the first children to receive the MMR vaccination in December 1989. He was 14 months old and an alert, lively and intelligent child according to his father, Richard, a dealer in fine art and antiques, writes Jeremy Laurance.

"Within two weeks he had lost his speech and started bumping into the furniture. He seemed to lose his sense of balance. Then he became more and more withdrawn. He didn't appear to be listening." Eventually autism was diagnosed, and he also developed bowel problems.

Mr Miles, 42, of west London, said: "We have a video of Robert before the vaccination and there is no question of him having had any signs of the disorder earlier which were unrecognised. We are convinced it was caused by the MMR vaccination."

Matthew Poulter was 15 months old when he was vaccinated with MMR. His mother Rochelle, of Brighton, said: "He had been a sociable child but his speech just stopped. He was not saying anything, just grunts and moans. I am convinced it was the MMR. There was no other trauma that could possibly have caused it."

Both Matthew, now aged seven and Robert, now aged nine, have been granted legal aid to sue the manufacturers of the vaccine. They are among 300 cases being handled by Richard Barr, a partner in Norfolk solicitors Dawbarns. Mr Barr said: "We have been approached by 1,300 families and we are processing cases as fast as we can."

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Unhappy confinement for the artist known as Leon

DRAWINGS and graffiti by a man living in a plywood box for art go on show this week, writes Kate Watson-Smyth.

The artist, known only as Leon, emerged from his isolation on Monday after a week without food and having thrown a tantrum so violent that the gallery was forced to close.

Visitors to Brighton Media Centre had to be ushered away from the 7ft by 7ft crate where Leon began hurling abuse at onlookers. Nicky Tolton, operations manager, said Leon had been annoyed by people banging on his box to see his reaction.

"He just lost his rag," she said. "He was screaming abuse and banging on the side of his box with a tin pot which he used as a loo. It was quite frightening and we decided that it would be best to close the gallery for two hours until he calmed down."

The 30-year-old artist said he had suffered for art to make a comment on how mankind manipulated the individual. Leon's work will be on the Internet from today at www.squat.com/c6.



A man's world: Inside the 7ft by 7ft box in Brighton Media Centre where Leon, right, spent a week without food

Photographs: David Rose



Great performance art of our time:

Inson Wongsam, from Thailand, who in the 1980s sculpted an elephant out of a block of ice by precision whittling.

Pam Meldrum and Eric Wolf, who spent a week in a chicken coop in an art gallery in Ottawa in 1997, living on water and chicken-feed, listening to a recording of the clucking of hens.

Jamy Verheyewegen, the underwater artist, who paints while diving at depths of 120ft.

Joseph Ng, who cut his public hair and placed it on a plate while his colleague vomited into a bucket at a shopping centre in Singapore on New Year's Day 1994.

The unnamed couple in Sweden who called their son "Briooooompccclim-mmprovcmndksqbb llll6", claiming the name was "artistic". They were fined £400 for not giving their son a proper name.

Zush, the Spanish conceptual artist who declared himself the smallest country in the world.

— William Hartston

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Football-crazy fans paying out £1,300 a year



Going down: Sales of specialist magazines are slipping in the face of competition from newspapers. Photograph: Rui Xavier

Magazines relegated in readership league

By Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

THE heightened interest in football has had the perverse effect of threatening the future of some of Britain's best known football magazines.

In the latest round of circulation figures football magazines are looking as ragged as a Tottenham defence: *Show* lost 20.5 per cent of its sales in the last six months of 1997; *Match* dropped 23.5 per cent; *Soccer Stars* fell 22 per cent; *Total Football* went down 11.7 per cent and *Total Sport* lost 10.4 per cent.

Only the original of the new breed of adult football monthlies, *Four Four Two*, and

the club magazines dedicated to Manchester United and Liverpool managed to buck the trend.

These falling sales are a long way from the optimism of a few years ago when the men's magazine boom provoked publishers to pile into football magazines like they were a foreign transfer market.

Some believe that the magazines inevitably suffer because their advance print deadlines make them less topical. Some even say it is because of the difficulty of making anything a footballer says sound intelligent and interesting.

However Paul Simpson, editor of *Four Four Two*, believes the reason for the slump is much simpler: "You just have to

look at the proliferation of extensive sports sections in newspapers over the last three years. The pages devoted to sport have probably increased tenfold as newspapers try to use sport as part of the circulation war. They are using them to get readers to sample their newspaper, and are promoting heavily off the back of their sports coverage. Only a few years ago, the coverage was mainly match reports. Now they are doing the longer features that used to belong in magazines."

The magazines do not even have a World Cup frenzy to look forward to. So many special supplements and one-off magazines are produced during the finals that they are likely to see only a small uplift in sales.

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FOOTBALL-CRAZY Manchester United fans are spending an average of more than £1,300 a year to support their team.

A survey of Premiership clubs shows that all fans are spending over 17 per cent more than they were two years ago on football – but most do not seem to mind.

The survey, by the Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research in Leicester, highlights the huge disparities in the amounts charged and spent by clubs and their supporters in the pursuit of soccer pleasure.

Manchester United, currently the country's most successful team, inevitably attract the most support, both financially and spiritually.

With a merchandising shop at Old Trafford that stocks everything from Manchester United bedspreads to Manchester United wallpaper, it is hardly surprising that the spending of the average season-ticketholder amounts to £1,374.

That comprises £1,250 spent on a season ticket (£330 a year

for home games), the cost of travelling to matches home and away and the cost of tickets to away games. On top of that, diehard fans are forking out an average of £1.26 a year on club merchandise.

Despite the fact that the nationwide cost of replica shirts ranges from about £40 to £80, fans are still buying them by the millions.

At Newcastle United, 73 per cent of season-ticketholders reported buying a replica shirt during the 1996/97 season, compared with just 38 per cent of Southampton fans.

The Office of Fair Trading announced this week that it was to investigate allegations of price-fixing among soccer clubs and shirt manufacturers.

Fans' annoyance at teams changing their strip several times a year is well documented, but the survey, conducted

for the FA Premier League, shows that while 9 per cent of supporters express disapproval at their club's merchandising policies, only 5 per cent actually oppose it.

In the spending/cost league, Chelsea come runners-up to Manchester United, with season ticket-holders laying out a total of £1,144 on attending matches and in the club shop.

The amount spent by supporters has climbed by an average of £689, with the cost of a season ticket rising on average by £31, to £293. Chelsea and Spurs are the only clubs charging more than £400 – £447 for a Stamford Bridge seat and £413 at White Hart Lane. The cost of a match ticket has risen too, typically from £15 to £17.

John Williams, head of the research team at the Sir Norman Chester Centre, said: "We still can't find much active op-

position to merchandising. Only 9 per cent of fans do not approve, while 64 per cent think the level of merchandising is OK."

The survey also studied supporters' views on the reintroduction of terracing (38 per cent were in favour) and stadium approval rates (73.1 per cent liked recent changes).

There were disappointments, however, in continued efforts to increase attendances among women and ethnic minority groups.

The survey found that only one supporter in 12 was female – the same as last year – and only 1 per cent of fans come from ethnic minorities, despite the fact that they comprise 5.5 per cent of the national population.

"Of course this is disappointing, the same as if you are walking down the street and you hear a racist remark," said Peter Leaver, Premier League chief executive.

"Racism is part of life, and will not disappear overnight. We just have to keep working at it."

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Camelot told: stop sales to children

By Rosa Prince

NATIONAL Lottery organisers Camelot were yesterday told to do more to stop children buying tickets and scratchcards. The warning by the lottery regulator Ofot followed new research showing that 50 per cent of children between 12 and 15 have bought a scratchcard illegally.

John Stoker, acting director of Ofot following the resignation earlier this month of Peter Davis, said Camelot must work harder to stop sales to children. He said: "Camelot have been doing things that are designed to get a handle on the problem. But the figures do suggest that not

enough is being done. It is obviously of some concern to us."

A spokesman for Camelot said: "Camelot has always been committed to preventing under-age sales and we believe we have the most rigorous age controls in the lottery industry."

Camelot currently runs a helpline for people who believe a retailer is selling to under-age customers. But the spokesman admitted only 26 outlets have had their franchise removed for supplying tickets to children since the lottery began.

Research commissioned by Ofot and conducted by gambling expert Dr Sue Fisher revealed that 2 per cent of the 10,000 children surveyed had a serious problem with scratchcards - gambling to the extent that relationships with family and friends, and school work, were affected.

Paul Bellringer, director of the gambling support group Gamcare, said scratchcard addiction damaged children's lives. He said: "It is quite devastating. First they use up all their own money, then they steal from the family and finally they steal from the outside. They will often start absenting themselves from school and become isolated from their friends."

After Tracey Makin became a millionaire at the age of 16 when she scooped the lottery jackpot last month, fears have grown that younger and younger children will be tempted by scratchcards and the lottery.

Campaigners are also concerned that the lottery is portrayed as family fun, rather than a form of gambling, with the televised draw going out at prime time on BBC1.

Mr Bellringer yesterday called for the lottery age limit to be raised to 18. He said: "We are given the impression that the lottery is a soft form of entertainment, and it can be, but it is also gambling and people should be cautious with it. If the lottery age limit is 16 that really means 13- and 14-year-olds will be playing."

A spokeswoman for the Department of Culture said the Government had no plans at present to raise the age limit. The Gamcare helpline number is 0845 6000133.

THE BIG GAMBLE

- More than 70 per cent of the adult population play the lottery every week, spending around £100m on the Saturday and Wednesday draws and on scratch cards.
- Since November 1994 523 millionaires have been created.
- The largest single win, £20m, went to the Benson family of Hull.
- Just under 50 per cent of 12- to 15-year-olds have bought instant scratch cards illegally. And 40 per cent have played the online lottery game.
- 5 per cent of children under 16 have a problem with gambling - 2 per cent are addicted to scratch-cards.

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Lifelong Learning The Role for Universities

Thursday 5 March 1998 • Central London

The Government is due to publish a series of White Papers on Lifelong Learning in early 1998, from the DfEE, Scottish and Welsh Offices. This one day CVCP conference will explore the role for universities in developing and implementing the Government's proposals. Universities already play a significant role in lifelong learning, providing courses at all levels - HND, undergraduates, PhD and CPD. How will the developments announced in the White Papers affect this role? In particular what changes will be needed in universities' management, access, curriculum and funding? How can higher education generally develop its interface and partnership with further education to deliver the flexible learning opportunities that lifelong learning demands?

The conference is for senior managers in higher and further education, academics, careers advisers and training and personnel officers in business and funding organisations.

Speakers include

Baroness Blackstone, Minister for Education and Employment
Diana Warwick, Chief Executive, Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals
Professor Bob Fryer, Principal, Northern College (Lifelong Learning Advisory Group)
Dr Geraldine Kenney-Wallace, MD and VC, British Aerospace Virtual University

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Scorching humour highlights tan risks



Fry-up: Two of the posters aimed at 16-24 year-olds, who are most likely to burn

A POSTER campaign ridiculing young people who show off suntans was launched yesterday to drive home the message of the harmful effects of the sun.

Research shows that people aged 16 to 24 are the most likely to get sunburnt, with a third experiencing sunburn in the past year.

The study shows that more than three-quarters of young

women (78 per cent) actively seek a tan despite the fact that the vast majority (94 per cent) are aware of the risks.

The Health Education Authority posters and postcards launched today, use humorous and shock-tactic images including a sunburnt woman baked on a plate and a young man grilling himself on the barbecue.



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Bug may trigger traffic gridlock

By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

A DIRE warning about the consequences of a computer crash at the millennium - with public safety put at risk, and business facing breakdown - was issued yesterday by the European Commission.

The commission said that the threat would be aggravated by the fact that the "millennium bug" will collide with extensive computerised preparations for the introduction of the single currency from next year - adding to the critical workload.

Some British officials suspect that a full-blown 2000 computer crisis could lead to postponement of the introduction of the single currency - giving European Union member states the ideal excuse for greater financial preparation for the currency launch.

In Brussels, Barbara Roche, trade and industry minister, said that Britain, currently holding the EU presidency, was staging a community-wide conference in May to brainstorm solutions to the problem.

Don Cruickshank, chairman of Action 2000, the Government body

set up to tackle the issue, said yesterday that his organisation's main role would be to co-ordinate public sector contingency planning "to ensure there are no major disruptions to public services" such as telecommunications, health services, transport management systems, social security and emergency services.

The commission paper, on "The Year 2000 Computer Problem", explained that because computers had been programmed to recognise two-digit years, as in 98, the year 2000 would be represented by 00.

But most computers were programmed to interpret 00 as 1900, and would be unable to cope. "Several systems are already beginning to fail when processing future dates and others will not show failures until later in the year 2000," the paper said.

Small business are particularly vulnerable - but big business that relies on small business suppliers and customers could also be put at risk by their failure.

The paper warns: "Global infrastructures, such as those supporting telecommunications, financial markets and air transportation, may be affected, with economic and social consequences world-wide."

Leading article, page 20

problem, organisations must be aware that they may fail to complete their conversion process by the end of 1999," the paper said. "Adequate contingency plans need to be put in place in order to ensure business continuity or survival should the IT support fail or become inadequate.

"This is a task for the business as a whole and requires direct involvement of the top management.

The shortage of programming and project management skills is becoming one of the most critical issues. Apart from the overall scale of the problem, the availability of professionals who are proficient in relatively old programming languages and are able to manage very large and complex projects is limited.

Small business are particularly vulnerable - but big business that relies on small business suppliers and customers could also be put at risk by their failure.

The paper warns: "Global infrastructures, such as those supporting telecommunications, financial markets and air transportation, may be affected, with economic and social consequences world-wide."

"Given the complexity of the



Gridlock A scene from the Italian job in which traffic chaos is engineered by sabotaging traffic control computers. It is feared that the millennium computer bug could cause such chaos for real if action is not taken now

Photograph: Ronald Grant Archive

Skills gap leaves firms hunting 70,000 staff

By Nicholas von Herberstein

INFORMATION technology recruitment consultancies are facing a crisis over a lack of skilled candidates. There are 70,000 IT vacancies and there is no immediate hope of filling them.

"A serious mismatch exists between IT skills demand and labour supply. The consequences are clear because businesses depend on IT to operate and will therefore be unable to do all that they have planned," said Bob Wirszec, director general of the Computer Software Services Association.

The millennium bug is not the only reason for increased demand for IT skills. The financial institutions need new programs for European economic and monetary union (Emu), whether Britain joins in the first wave or not. This draws the number of skilled programmers and systems engineers away from working on the millennium bug, and leaves a gap that may possibly have disastrous effects," said Tony Jones managing director of Vision Computer Recruitment.

The skills shortage is good

news for graduates, however. Larger companies will recruit straight from university and train up newcomers. Neil Hollaway, deputy general manager of Microsoft UK, said that universities did not gear their curriculum enough towards the industry. "Graduates are an investment for most companies, which will only see a return after nine months to a year."

The prospects for graduates are extremely good. Two or three years ago, a graduate with no experience would start on a salary of £12,000. This year they can expect £18,000, a rise of 50 per cent.

"Companies are desperate ... Candidates with three or four years' experience can expect to have up to 30 companies snapping at them," Mr Jones said.

Experienced contractors, or freelancers can afford to pick and choose. David Swain, MD of Stanford Associates, said: "There are a lot of contractors around, but they are demanding higher rates, because they don't like to get too tied into long arrangements. If they do, they want some kind of bonus arrangement or golden handcuff to stay."

Former MP Allason wins new trial over 'Mirror' story

FORMER Tory MP Rupert Allason has been granted the right at the Court of Appeal to a new trial in his battle for damages from the *Mirror* newspaper over what he claims was a malicious story which cost him a lucrative book contract.

The former MP for Torbay, who writes as Nigel West, sued the newspaper for malicious falsehood over an article in 1992 which claimed that 50 MPs had challenged him to demonstrate his concern for Maxwell pensioners by giving them the estimated £250,000 libel damages he had just won from the newspaper in another defamation action. That action was dismissed with costs in the High Court.

New deep-coal mine for Wales

PLANS were unveiled yesterday for the first new deep coal mine in South Wales in 20 years which will create up to 300 jobs. In a £25m project, private mining company Celtic Energy is teaming up with Tower Colliery workers who bought their pit from British Coal and then turned it into a profit-making success.

If planning permission is given, the mine will be sited at Margam, near Port Talbot, to tap into estimated reserves of 27 million tons annual 400,000 tons of coal to markets in cement, power generation and steel-making at British Steel's nearby giant plant.

Church wedding for divorcees

DIVORCEES are to be allowed to remarry in church in a major change proposed by the Church in Wales. Welsh Anglican bishops yesterday published draft guidelines which give their clergy freedom to conduct wedding services. The reform will make individual vicars responsible for the decision whether to remarry second-time couples. It will be debated when the church governing body meets in April and approval could affect a similar change being discussed in the Church of England; a working party set up by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, is currently considering the whole issue of marriage and divorce.

No house deal for drugs man

A JAILED drug dealer yesterday lost his bid to buy the council house he had used as a base to sell heroin.

The House of Lords ruled that Bristol City Council had the right to proceed with a possession order against Richard Lovell. The landmark ruling will effectively stop Lovell buying the council house from his jail cell, where he is serving a five-and-a-half-year sentence after admitting conspiracy to supply heroin and crack cocaine from the property.

The ruling closes a four-year legal battle over the house on the Southmead estate in Bristol.

*Excludes Mondeo Aspen and Verona. For vehicles produced from February 2nd 1998. Prices start at £15,495 on the road. Vehicle featured above is Mondeo Ghia X.

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Oprah triumphs over the Texas cattlemen

By David Usborne
in New York

FIVE weeks after it began, the Oprah Winfrey mad cow trial ended in Amarillo yesterday with the jury of 12 coming squarely down on the side of the famed television talk show host and finding against a group of local cattlemen who had accused her of sending the beef market into a spin two years ago.

After cheers went up from crowds outside the monolithic downtown court building, which in its lobby boasts a colourful and proud fresco of horse-riding cowboys, a beaming Ms Winfrey emerged to declare: "Free speech not lies. It rocks!"

The wildly popular Ms Winfrey, 40, was forced to move her entire talk-show operation from Chicago to the Texas panhandle city for the duration of the trial, which generated headlines across the country from the moment it started. Normally soporific and dusty Amarillo, meanwhile, basked in the excitement of famous guests coming into its midst daily for the Oprah show's tapings.

An issue in court was an April 1996 episode of her programme devoted to mad cow disease in Britain. A guest, rancher-turned-vegetarian Howard Lyman, said that while there had been no documented cases of the syndrome in the United States herd, it was bound to strike on this side of the water if it had not already.

Angry Texas ranchers accused Ms Winfrey, her production company and Mr



Triumphant: Oprah Winfrey outside the courtroom yesterday

Lyman of defaming beef and falling foul of new and highly controversial "veggie label" laws. On the books in 14 states in the US, the laws seek to protect foodstuffs from slander or defamation.

Claiming that the offending programme had sent beef prices to a 10-year-low, the ranchers were seeking damages from the defendant of almost \$11m.

In the course of the show in 1996, Ms Winfrey asked Mr Lyman if he believed that an outbreak of "mad-cow", or BSE, in the US would make AIDS look like the common cold. He concurred that it would, to

which Ms Winfrey responded that Mr Lyman had just "stopped me from eating another burger".

But after six hours of deliberation, the Amarillo jury sided with Ms Winfrey's argument that she was merely exercising her rights to free speech. One jury member, Pat Crowley, said: "We felt that a lot of rights have eroded in this country. Our freedom of speech may be the only one we have left".

The forewoman of the jury, Christy Sams, hinted that finding against the cattlemen may not have been so easy. "We didn't necessarily like what we had to do but we had to decide for the First Amendment," she said in reference to the US Constitution.

Conceding that the trial had been "very, very difficult" for her personally, Ms Winfrey, none the less, remained defiant in defending her record. During the trial she had the support of friends who came to sit in the court's public gallery, including the Black American poet, Maya Angelou.

"I will continue to use my voice," Ms Winfrey declared. "I believed at the beginning this was an attempt to muzzle that voice in this country and I refuse to be muzzled. I will not change the way I operate".

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association, meanwhile, issued a statement saying it was "disappointed" with the verdict.

"In today's world of instant and widespread communications, the impact of misinformation can be devastating on the market for perishable agricultural products," the group said.



A boy using the Indian flag as a sunshade waits for Sonia Gandhi at a Congress rally near Calcutta yesterday, the last day of campaigning for the Indian elections; Mrs Gandhi was unable to attend

Photograph: AFP

Clinton moves to halt tax on Internet sales

By Mary Dejevsky
in Washington

PRESIDENT Bill Clinton yesterday came out on the side of the angels of technological progress and the free market in an increasingly bitter tussle between individual states and US business, big and small. At issue is whether the growing number of Americans who buy goods over the Internet should be liable to pay sales tax on their purchases and if so, to whom.

Speaking in San Francisco, within shouting distance of America's "Silicon Valley", Mr Clinton called for a moratorium on all new taxation of goods and services sold over the Internet, and said the moratorium should apply to all taxes, federal, state or local. His reasoning was that nothing should be done to stifle the development of electronic commerce, which is still in its infancy.

This was Mr Clinton's first pronouncement on a subject that has insinuated itself almost unnoticed on to the US legislative agenda, but has huge implications in terms of the money and principles that are at stake. Taken to its logical conclusion, Internet commerce not only poses questions about the highly developed US tax system, but also threatens the delicate balance between the rights of consumers and the rights of the federal authorities.

Americans with access to the Internet - 20 million people and growing - can buy an ever wider range of goods electronically. Initial reluctance to use the services on offer, largely because of fear about credit card confidentiality, has faded, and the sector is

seen as one of the biggest areas of potential growth.

A combination of factors makes the US particularly fertile ground for Internet shopping. People in rural areas have traditionally relied on mail order to obtain clothes and luxuries. Computers make it easier to compare prices for large items - a big consideration in a consumer culture that pushes people to search for a bargain amid a dazzling variety of brands and prices.

Price, though, is also a consideration. The US allows individual states to impose a sales tax, and most do. This is added at the till and the rate varies from state to state and according to the category of goods. Sales via the Internet, however, are currently exempt from state sales tax: because the states cannot agree on who should levy it and how.

Late last year, a group of states banded together to propose reciprocal taxation on mail order sales that would also apply to the Internet. This was abandoned after lobbying from business and consumers. This week, the subject came up again: the call for a tax on Internet sales was the number one item on the agenda of the twice-yearly state governors' meeting in Washington.

Legislation about to go before Congress would provide for a six-year moratorium on Internet sales taxes. Mr Clinton's intervention makes the bill more likely to pass.

However, the states, whose autonomy derives to a great extent from their capacity to raise taxes, will not give up without a struggle.

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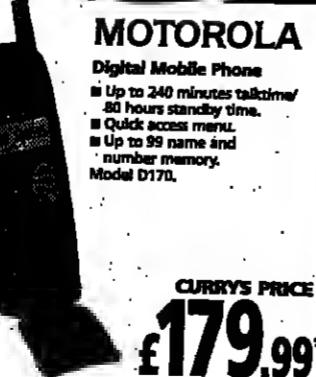


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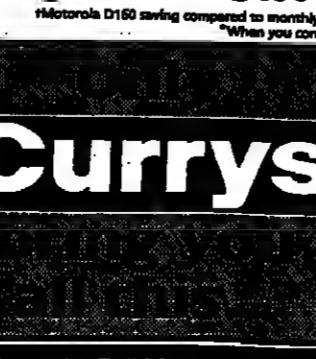
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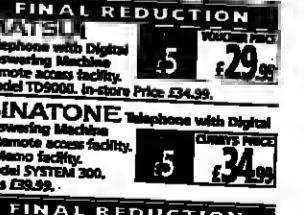
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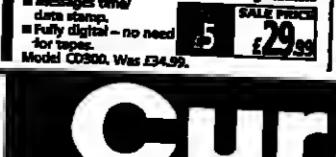
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Mystery of the winning lottery ticket cashed after owner's death

By Tim Cawley in Madrid

A LOTTERY ticket bought by a man from Galicia in Spain who died before he could cash it has £20,000 prize has been cashed, but no one knows by whom.

This bombshell has torpedoed efforts by relatives of Juan Villasante to exhume his body in the belief that he carried the ticket to his grave after his fatal heart attack

on the day of the draw. Efforts are now being focused upon tracking down the culprit who intercepted the ticket and cheated Villasante's family of their lifelong dream.

The relatives scoured his house from top to bottom once they knew he held a winning ticket, and set the police on to the undertakers whom they accused of rifling the dead man's clothing. Now they conclude that someone must have taken the ticket

from Villasante's pocket before he was buried.

The old man, a bachelor of 76, collapsed in the street early on 26 January and was taken to the local hospital of the Galician fishing village of Pobra do Caraminal, where he died. His body was laid out by local undertakers who handed over the dead man's effects - sans ticket - to his next of kin.

The family's lawyer, Manuel Quintana,

reckons the ticket could have been cashed before news of Villasante's death was made public - a week after the event. Or afterwards, by unknown intermediaries.

Or, as has happened before in this part of the country, the prize-winning ticket could have been bought by an organisation devoted to laundering the proceeds of drug-trafficking.

The next step is to find out what hap-

pened by talking to the lottery's organisers, Spain's organisation for the blind, the ONCE, and the bank where the winning ticket was cashed, and to whom the money was handed. "It's possible that the person gave a false identity, but there are ways of finding out who it really is," Mr Quintana said.

The eventual beneficiaries will be Vil-

lasante's nephew Jaime, a former building worker who receives £150 a month invalidity pension since falling from a ladder, and his wife Maria Antonia, who works as a cleaner in six houses for two pounds an hour.

The couple have three daughters: the eldest is suing her estranged husband for payments towards the upbringing of their son; one daughter is still at school, and the third contributes to the family her wages as a factory hand in a fish-cannery.

California to shut cannabis clubs

By Tim Cawley
in Los Angeles

CALIFORNIA'S summer-long marijuana wars moved closer to an open showdown yesterday, with the prospect of a court-ordered shutdown of the state's marijuana clubs.

The California Attorney General, armed with a sympathetic court ruling, was to seek an injunction to close up to 20 clubs, his spokesman said.

The clubs, which claim only to dispense marijuana to the sick, sprang up across the state after California voters legalised the personal medical use of marijuana. But they have been the prime target for government officials determined to nip the legalisation of marijuana in the bud.

Dennis Peron, operator of the Cannabis Cultivators Club in San Francisco, which is said to sell as much as 50lb of marijuana a week to 8,000 clients from a city centre office building, promised to defy any court

order. "We're going to stay here until the tanks come," he said.

Mr Peron's club is the most visible operation, where pot is freely sold in what critics say is a party atmosphere thick with marijuana smoke. The club was raided and shut down once under orders from Attorney General Dan Lundgren, a conservative Republican now in the thick of his campaign for the California governorship.

In November 1996, a solid majority of California voters passed Proposition 215, allowing seriously ill people or their "primary care-giver" to grow and use marijuana on a doctor's recommendation.

Activists in six other states and Washington DC are pushing to put similar bills on the ballot this year, but President Clinton's administration has efforts to contain the fallout and prevent medical marijuana use becoming a national phenomenon.

In a hearing next month, US prosecutors will separately seek injunctions to close at least six clubs. The clubs claim that they serve as the "primary care-giver" under Proposition 215, giving them the right to supply and sell marijuana. But the California Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed that argument after a series of appeals.

The courts have essentially said that cannabis clubs are not allowed," said a spokesman for Mr Lundgren.

It remains to be seen how rapidly his office will move against the clubs, but there was little doubt that Mr Peron's operation is the first on the list of closures.

Mr Peron, a larger-than-life California personality, and a gay Vietnamese veteran who co-authored Proposition 215, insists all marijuana is "medical".

His inflammatory statements have not endeared him to clubs in other cities, where activists are more carefully screened and which operate quietly, sometimes with the co-operation of local police.

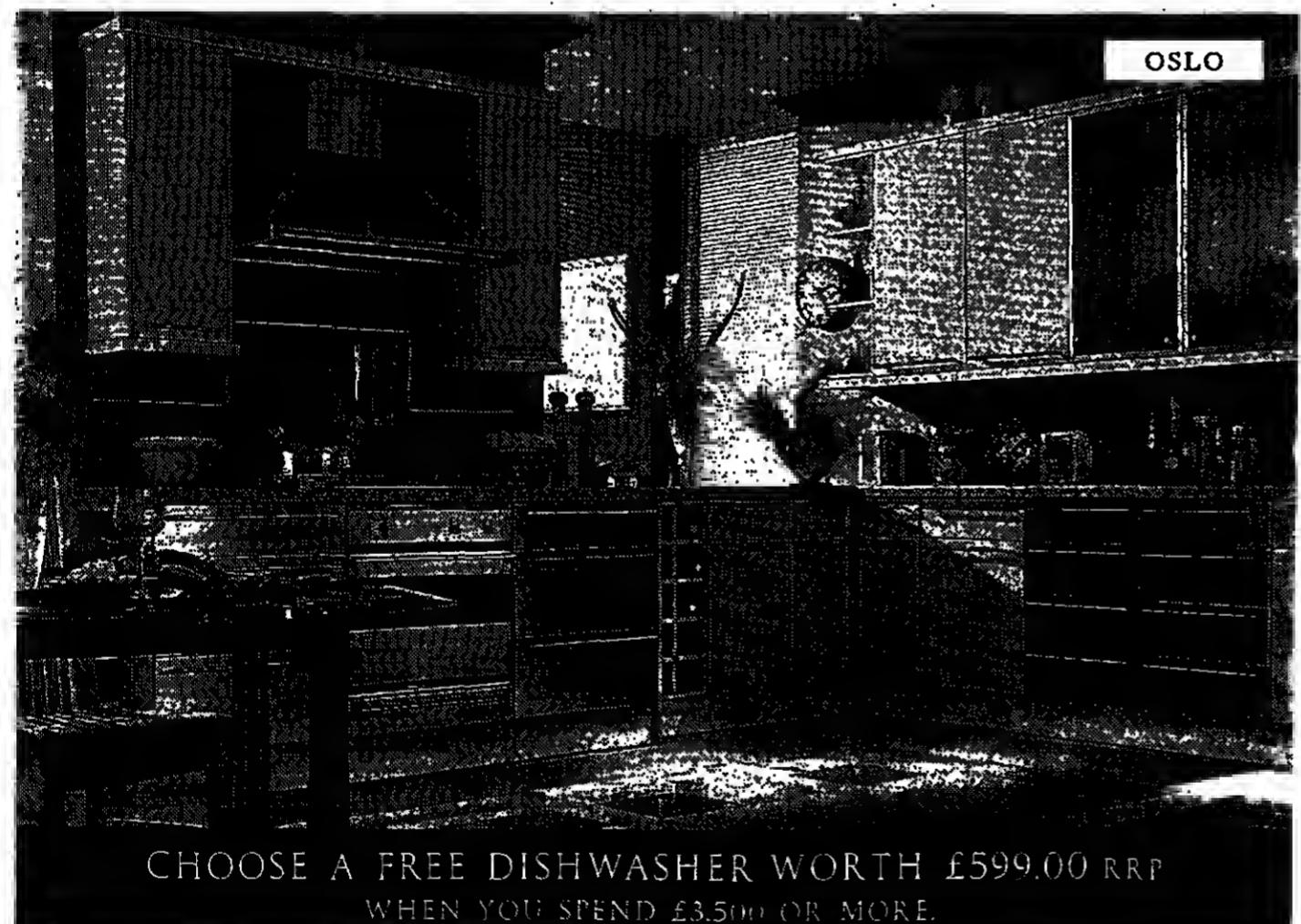
Switzerland's first legal brothel opens its doors to all



Open for business: Valentin Landmann posing inside his brothel in Zurich this week which opened as the first legal brothel in Switzerland after years of court and financial battles

Photograph: Christoph Ruckstuhl/AP

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French artists challenge judges over drugs law

MORE than 100 French artists and intellectuals have signed a petition admitting to taking soft drugs and offering themselves for prosecution, writes John Lichfield in Paris.

The intention is partly to embarrass the government of Lionel Jospin, but mostly to embarrass the judiciary, which has brought a number of legal cases against high-profile campaigners for the legalisation of the cannabis and other drugs.

The signatories of the "petition of 111" include the 1960s Franco-German political activist, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the film director Patrice Chéreau, the fashion designer and Pres-

ident of Paris Opera, Pierre Bergé, and the actress Marina Vlady. The petitioners state: "At one moment or other of my life, I have consumed stupefying drugs. I know that in admitting publicly that I am a drug user, I can be prosecuted. This is a risk I am ready to take."

The motive is to draw attention to the hypocrisies and inconsistencies of government policy and the application of the French anti-drugs law. Public admission to drugs-taking can be prosecuted in France as an incitement to use by others.

The president of Act-Up, a group campaigning for the legalisation of soft drugs, ap-

peared in court this week for distributing a tract called "I like ecstasy". A counter-culture newspaper, *L'Elephant Rose* was forced into bankruptcy recently after being prosecuted under the same law. No action was taken, however, against others like the pop singer Johnny Hallyday and the Justice Minister Elisabeth Guignou, who have also spoken frankly about drugs.

Mr Jospin said he favoured the decriminalisation of cannabis during the election campaign last May. His government has stepped back from that position but measures are expected soon to allow experimental use of cannabis in hospitals.

ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATION JOAN CUSACK - Best Supporting Actress

"... RIB-ACHINGLY FUNNY
... I HAVENT LAUGHED
SO MUCH SINCE
THE FULL MONTY."
Nick Fisher - THE SUN

"... A SHAMELESSLY
FUNNY COMEDY."
Matthew Sweet - INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

"KEVIN KLINE
DELIVERS A
TOUR DE FORCE
OF COMIC ACTING...
CUSACK RESPONDS
WITH SOME OF THE
MOST TRUTHFUL
AND FUNNIEST
COMIC ACTING OF THE
PAST YEAR."
Christopher Tooley - DAILY MAIL

Kevin Kline
In & Out

12
REVIEW BY CLIVE STONE
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NOW SHOWING AT CINEMAS EVERYWHERE

Dylan and son make Grammys a family affair

FOR THE producers at CBS television it was occasionally scary. For the British music industry it was surely not bad, but no one came out from Wednesday night's Grammy awards show in New York more hurt than the family Dylan.

It was a night of like father, like son. Virtually overlooked by the Grammys until this week, 59-year-old Bob Dylan won three awards at the ceremony at New York's Radio City Music Hall. Better still, his son Jakob, took home two Grammys for the work of his own hand, the Wallflowers.

Dylan Sr's prizes all came from his 1997 album *Time Out of Mind* - his first top 10 album in almost 20 years - including best album of the year. Jakob's were both awarded for the Wallflower song "One Headlight".

Other top awards went to Shawn Colvin, whose poignant ballad about a distraught mother who burns down her house, "Sunny Come Home", was record of the year. Paula Cole, meanwhile, was named best new artist.

In what seemed a slight to

The music Oscars were more schmaltz than cutting edge, says David Usborne in New York

rock, however, only mainstream performances made the show itself, broadcast by CBS to a world-wide audience of 1.5 billion. Jimi Hendrix were not there, while Chemical Brothers, Tool, Radiohead and the Wallflowers got their prizes in a pre-awards ceremony not broadcast.

CBS controllers were twice given the kitemen. First, a naked-chested man with "Soy Bomb" scrawled on his torso charged the stage while a totally unphased Bob Dylan performed his single, "Love Sick". And then as Ms Colvin was attempting to accept her award, a member of the rap group Wu-Tang Clan seized the microphone to declare their music better than Puff Daddy's.

Next year, suggested Grammys organisers Michael Greene, he might arrange for a front-of-stage mosh-pit for those unwilling to behave.



Playing on: Bob Dylan performing his single 'Love Sick' - ignoring a prankster at the 40th Grammy Awards in New York this week

Photograph: AP

If it's sentimental, the judges like to say Yes

THE GRAMMYS matter. Held every year by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, they are the music industry's equivalent of the Oscars. Win big and watch sales of your song or album soar.

And yet for years, the awards ceremony has been the one that everyone loved to ridicule. The complaint is that the Grammy voters are out of touch and their choices are mainstream and sentimental. Michael Bolton has won two Grammys. So have the Rolling Stones.

And remember in 1989 when Milli Vanilli won the best new artist and its two stage-faces, Rob Pilatus and Fab Morvan, then had to return the prize after it was discovered they had never sung a note on their album? Oops.

The problem lies partly in the voting. The academy has 9,000 paid-up members, all of whom participate in selecting

the winners. Many may never have even listened to some of the songs and acts they are meant to be judging. There is simply too much music out there.

The sheer volume of product is also reflected in the mountainous and often confusing collection of categories - 92 in all, covering every type of music from rock to classical and everything in between, including Best Album Notes. There are awards for performers, for video makers, record producers and so on. How many nominees were up for gongs yesterday? Four hundred and sixty.

The Academy has been trying to find formulas to make the awards more relevant and responsive. A panel of just 20 industry insiders is now responsible for selecting nominees in the five most important categories.

Germans look east for inspiration

By Imre Karacs
in Bonn

ON THE threshold of the Berlin Republic the attitudes of Germany's two nations are at last beginning to converge. "Ossi" (eastern) aspirations increasingly resemble "Wessi" dreams, according to a study by the Allensbach polling organisation. Somewhere along the Elbe, the twain will soon meet.

This heart-warming trend is unlikely to be relished by Helmut Kohl, the Chancellor of German unity, as the rapprochement owes little to the perceived superiority of the Western way of life. Allensbach's findings, based on years of research, show that the former citizens of East Germany, the so-called German Democratic Republic, have changed little. It is the Wessis who have moved east in their mindset, their sub-conscious lured by the much-maligned achievements of state socialism.

It seems that at a time of mass unemployment and insecurity, West Germans are grasping for an anchor and many are prepared to forego the luxuries of individual freedom and enterprise. Liberty is abstract, profit an evil. What Wessis yearn for today is a pay cheque pegged to the cost of living.

"Our society is turning back towards a Socialist interpretation of freedom," writes Professor

Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, head of the Allensbach institute, "a freedom safeguarded by the state: freedom from unemployment, from poverty in old age, from consequences of illness".

Allensbach has been asking West Germans since the Seventies to make a choice between liberty and the nebulous concept of "social justice and equality". For 20 years, libertarians were on the march, beating equality into a distant second place. The period coincided with the eclipse of the Social Democrats by Mr Kohl's Christian Democrats.

Since the last elections in 1994, however, liberty has been on the wane. This year, only 47 per cent of the same electoral panel chose freedom as their top priority, while the equalists have shot up to 42 per cent from near insignificance. In eastern Germany, social justice scored 60 per cent, up 10 per cent in the last four years.

Further questions revealed that more than half of West Germans, and three-quarters of Ossis, thought it was the duty of the state to provide jobs. Two-thirds of Wessis looked to the state to guarantee their pensions and 61 per cent wanted the state to protect them from the consequences of ill health.

As for the Chancellor of unity, who put hard graft ahead of state hands-out but failed to put Germans to work, he seems redundant in the new world.

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UN chief rounds on critics of peace deal

By David Osborne
in New York

BLUFFETED by furious critics from some quarters in Washington, the United Nations yesterday launched an impasioned defence of the agreement reached last weekend by the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, with Saddam Hussein on continuing weapons inspection.

Aware that some are portraying him as an apologist for President Saddam, Mr Annan himself distributed a letter to UN staff saying it was "not unexpected that there would be some criticism of us and misrepresentations".

With obvious impatience, he added: "We should all await Security Council action on this agreement. It is the Council not a few critics, who will have the last word."

Britain last night circulated a first draft of a resolution that it hopes will be adopted by the full Council in the next few days, enshrining the language of Mr Annan's agreement.

Provisions in it warn Iraq that it will face the "severest consequences" if the pact is violated. This might provoke strong opposition from Council members more sympathetic to Baghdad, including France and Russia.

Mr Annan noted in his statement that the alternative to striking a deal with President Saddam would have been the effective end of the work of Uncom, the UN commission checking out weapons of mass destruction in Iraq since the end of the Gulf War.

He did not bother to add what else might have happened had he returned home empty-

handed - a fresh military confrontation in the region.

In a carefully orchestrated rebuttal to the criticism from Washington, the UN also fielded the chairman of Uncom Richard Butler, of Australia, to say his own words in support of the deal.

Mr Butler denied suggestions that provisions in the agreement would have the effect of weakening the commission.

He was referring in particular to arrangements whereby diplomats will accompany technical inspectors whenever they enter eight presidential sites designated as especially sensitive by Iraq. "As far as I am concerned I welcome it, I view it as strengthening Uncom," Mr Butler insisted. As regards the diplomats, he said: "Those arrangements are entirely satisfactory to me."

It was confirmed, meanwhile, that Mr Annan was appointing a veteran disarmament specialist from Sri Lanka, Jayantha Dhanapala, 59, as the new Uncom commissioner who will oversee the diplomats shepherding the inspectors into the presidential sites.

Mr Dhanapala, who is respected and popular in UN circles, will report first to Mr Butler who will retain overall control over Uncom.

Notably, Mr Butler expressed optimism that the new deal with President Saddam would be made to work and said in those circumstances he hoped that the current phase of the commission's work - discovering and destroying weapons - could be completed in "a relatively short time". It would be thereafter that the UN could begin considering lifting sanctions against Iraq.

The opposition has been led in Congress by the Republican majority leader in the Senate, Trent Lott, who questioned President Bill Clinton's apparent trust in Kofi Annan, and condemned the agreement as a victory for the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein.

"I cannot understand why the Clinton Administration would place trust in someone devoted to building a 'human relationship' with a mass murderer," he said.

"After years of denying that Saddam Hussein had any right to determine the scope of inspections or the make-up of inspection teams this agreement codifies his ability to do both."

Mrs Albright made three appearances in 24 hours to defend the agreement. On Wednesday, she prefaced her congressional testimony on Nato expansion with a statement on the Iraq agreement. Later in the afternoon, after Mr Lott's outburst, she held a press conference to contest his remarks.

"Some in Congress say 'reject it'. We believe the wisest course is to test it," she said. Now was not the time to bash the United Nations and she insisted: "We retain the authority, the responsibility, the means and the will to use military force if that is required."

Yesterday she made a further appearance in Congress to press her case. Additional support came from New York, where the arms inspection chief, Richard Butler, called a press conference to argue that the inspection regime had been strengthened by the addition of another layer of diplomatic authority.

Among the most influential lobbyists in Washington, however, was a former UN weapons inspector, David Kay, whose experience appears to give him a unique authority to speak out.

Combining a sense of personal mission to expose what he believes is Iraq's continuing weapons programme, and a re-

All clear: A United Nations staff member celebrating with colleagues during a bus trip from Amman, Jordan, yesterday when around 80 UN humanitarian staff, who had been pulled out of Baghdad to escape the threat of US military strikes, returned to Iraq. — Photograph: Ali Jarekji/Reuters

Albright opts for the 'wisest course'

By Mary Dejevsky
in Washington

THE US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, went before Congress for the second day running yesterday to try to subdue vocal opposition to the UN Secretary-General's agreement with Iraq. The agreement is being condemned as a sell-out by a forceful coalition made up of Republicans congressmen, former foreign policy practitioners, academics and former UN arms inspectors.

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Yeltsin's fury at ministers

PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin gave his government a televised tongue-lashing yesterday, promising to fire cabinet ministers who have slowed down economic reforms. "By the end of the session we will be short of three government members," Mr Yeltsin said at a meeting in the Kremlin. After years of decline, the government is forecasting economic growth of about 2 per cent in Russia this year. — AP, Moscow

Suicide hotel

THREE middle-aged Japanese men, all from the same company, hanged themselves in separate rooms at the same Tokyo hotel, police reported yesterday. The three men, all in their fifties, checked into the hotel at the same time. Each was wearing an identical white shirt when found hanging by identical white ropes. — Reuters, Tokyo

Mistaken ID

A MAN who may have mistakenly thought a bearded woman was a romantic rival was suspected of killing her and her friend. Witnesses say Eric Walter Running argued with the women at the Ambassador Restaurant and Lounge in Portland on Tuesday, left, then returned with a shotgun and opened fire. Jacqueline Julia Anderson, 29, died with her friend Barbara Gilpin, 44. Mr Running, 47, has not been found. — AP, Portland, Oregon

Lucky break

THREE Afghan men convicted of sodomy survived their execution and had their death sentences commuted. The men were to be executed by being buried beneath a brick wall knocked down by a tank. When they were dug out they were still alive, a radio report said. As a result, the men were allowed to live. — AP, Kabul



All clear: A United Nations staff member celebrating with colleagues during a bus trip from Amman, Jordan, yesterday when around 80 UN humanitarian staff, who had been pulled out of Baghdad to escape the threat of US military strikes, returned to Iraq. — Photograph: Ali Jarekji/Reuters

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Why we have been named Newspaper of the Year in the prestigious British Picture Editors' awards

'The Independent': simply the best

By David Swanborough Picture Editor

TO REPEAT last year's triumph as the black and white newspaper of the year was a thrill, but to be awarded the title of Newspaper of the Year as well is absolutely fabulous.

We have the smallest picture budget of all the national broadsheets but we consistently produce the best photographs. That is down to our brilliant team: the photographers and the picture desk.

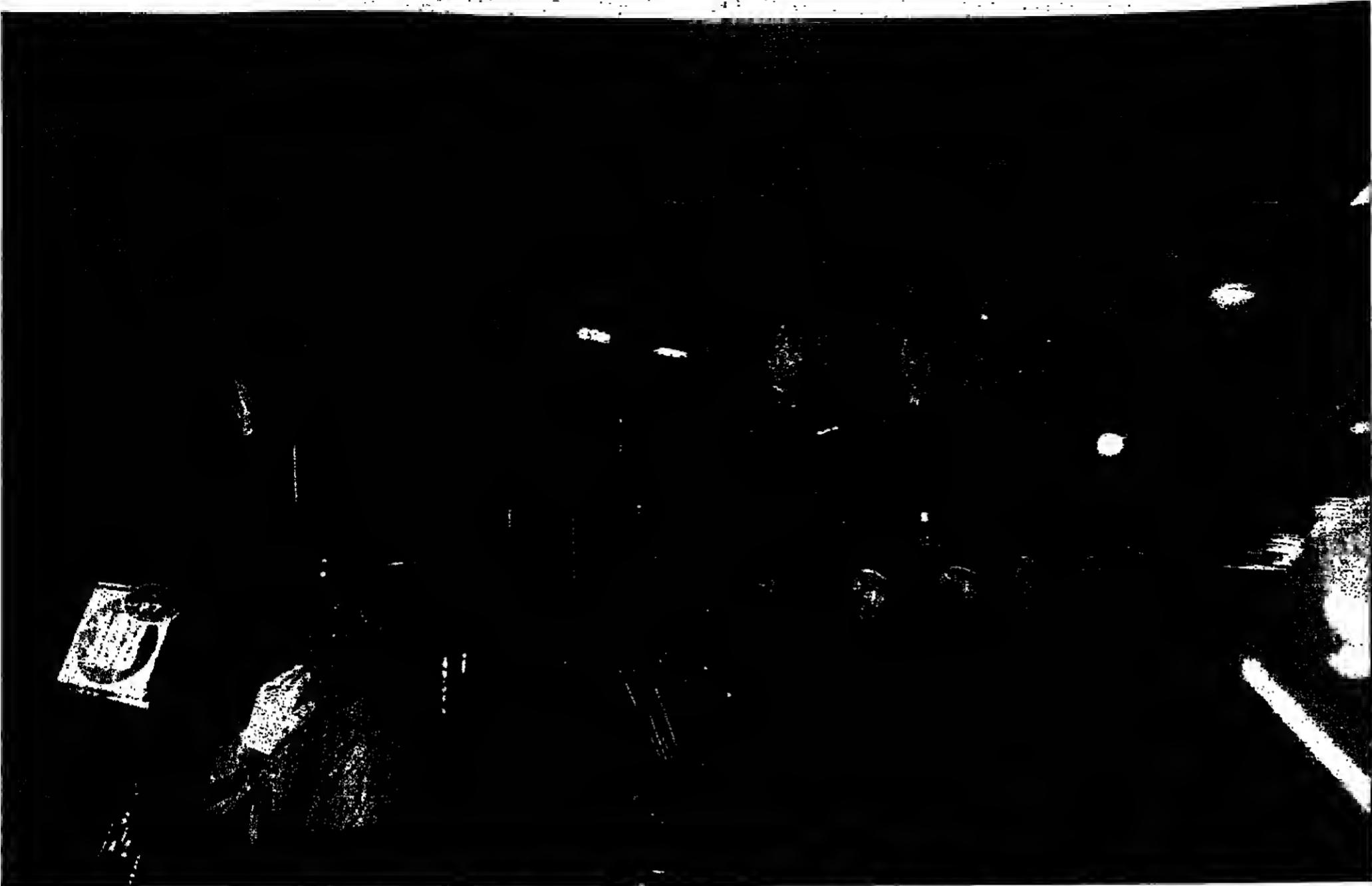
I know that you enjoy the pictures because my postbag is constantly full of plaudits. Please keep them coming - it is rewarding to hear of your enthusiasm. My editor, Rosie Boycott, shares that enthusiasm and it was a pleasure to accompany her onto the podium on Wednesday to receive the awards from the Prime Minister, Tony Blair.

Mr Blair, it seems, also appreciates pictures and he knows many of the photographers by name. He said he understood how difficult it was for them to work in dangerous places, often alerting the public to suffering and injustice in the world.

He knows, too, however, that you have to be on your guard when we have you in focus. On the election trail last year he was at a war museum to make a speech and was alarmed to spot his aide standing behind him on a chair. He whispered to her to get down but she said no; he tried again but had the same response. So he reluctantly began his speech. Afterwards she climbed down to reveal a swastika on the wall directly behind him!

Mr Blair entered into the spirit of the event on Wednesday evening at the Guildhall in the City of London, and even turned the tables on the photographers when he borrowed a camera and started organising the official photocall. I am not sure that he has a complete command of photographer's technique, but he certainly has the right banter.

I'm always ready to encourage new talent ... I wonder if he would consider a spell with us on work experience?



By David Rose: Chinese troops on the Hong Kong side of the border at dawn on 1 July 1997. They had wasted no time after the official handover of the former British colony



By Brian Harris: Giotto's broken-faced St Ruffino at the Basilica of St Francis, damaged by earthquakes in Umbria, Italy



By John Voos: from left, Michael Elphick, Peter O'Toole and Keith Waterhouse after Jeffrey Bernard's funeral

By Tom Pilston: a dancer from Cuba's Club Tropicana preparing to perform at the Royal Albert Hall last December

هذا من الأصل

best apes put men to shame

* Why do men with everything pay for sex? Is it some animal instinct?

Kathy Marks thinks not

ROBERT De Niro, who has threatened never to set foot on French soil again after he was questioned by the Paris vice squad about alleged links to an international prostitution ring, says, categorically, that he has "never in his life paid a woman for sex".

If so, the Hollywood actor is a rare example of moral rectitude in a world where fame and wealth go hand in hand with sleaze. Take Michael Douglas, plagued by so insatiable a sexual appetite that he checked himself into an addiction clinic. Or our own Hugh Grant, who fell from grace after his adventures with a hooker on a seedy night in London, and even more recently the photographers who have been snared and sampled during their visits to a London sauna and command of a £100-a-head massage parlour.

Hollywood's latest newsmonger, Robert De Niro, is considered

Allan Green, the former Director of Public Prosecutions, among the men who have courted disgrace by using prostitutes.

There are many modish psychological theories about why rich and powerful men — men who have it all, including their pick of beautiful women — choose to risk everything for the sake of a furtive encounter. Escapism, boredom, self-destructive urges, the sheer thrill of such flagrant sexual transgression, to name but a few. And the greater the risk, the bigger the payoff.

The notion that *homo sapiens*, in his sexual behaviour patterns, is driven by evolutionary survival strategies was given credence by the American geneticist, Stephen Pinker, in his recent book, *How The Mind Works*. Pinker wrote: "The reproductive success of males depends on how many females they mate with, but the reproductive

success of females does not depend on how many males they mate with. That makes females more discriminating. Males woo females and mate with any female that lets them. Females scrutinise males and mate only with the best ones, the ones with the best genes."

Yet if it all came down to crude biology, the jungle should be full of furiously fornicating birds and beasts. But even primates, our closest relatives, vary in their sexual habits. While chimpanzees are renowned for

their promiscuity, gorillas stick with the same harem, and mate only once every couple of years.

In any case, the behaviour of animals in the wild gives few clues as to why the male of the human species not only seeks multiple partners, but also goes to the lengths of paying for sex. Despite the recent discovery by scientists in Antarctica of penguins who apparently exchange sexual favours for precious rocks and stones to build nests, prostitution is not thought to be prevalent in the animal kingdom.

Perhaps the conduct of ancient tribal societies could prove illuminating. Do the chiefs of the primitive tribes of Amazonia, for instance, seek out the choicest young girls for their secret delectation? Absolutely not, says Stephen Hugh-Jones, a social anthropologist at the University of Cambridge. Polygamy is the norm among headmen in the Amazon, but clandestine fumblings are not. The Tukano tribes are particularly prudish in this respect, although the im-

its of Canada and elsewhere, intriguingly, lend each other their spouses as a matter of courtesy.

"There is no real parallel in tribal society," he says. "This kind of sexual thrill depends on entering an illicit and squalid underworld. But there are no seedy red light districts in the Amazon. I think tribal people would find this kind of behaviour rather odd."

The fact is that sexual sleaze, particularly involving prostitutes, is a feature of large, faceless cities. In order to flour-



Feeling frisky: Chimpanzees are renowned for their promiscuity, but gorillas stick with the same harem

Photograph: Vaughan Boan/ Planet Earth

She was young. Bodybuilding was her life. Did drugs kill her?

The dangers of steroids are well-known, but athletes still use them. By Kate Watson-Smyth



Joanne Amies-Winter and her husband, Steve

Photograph: PA

Joanne Amies-Winter was extremely proud of her 44-28-35 figure. She was also obsessed with bodybuilding, spending at least three hours each day honing her physique to perfection.

By last year, the rigid training regime had paid off and she was the second strongest woman in the world. But earlier this week she died in her sleep. The whispers about the use of steroids, ever present in the bodybuilding world, are getting louder.

Her husband, Steve, himself a fanatical weight-lifter, has dismissed the suggestions of drug-taking, saying his wife of seven months had been hoping to have a baby. "I never took any steroids ever. She was a natural bodybuilder and she would never have taken them. She hated the idea because she thought it belittled everything she tried to achieve," he said.

But despite his denials, one of Mrs Amies-Winter's bodybuilding friends has privately admitted she had taken steroids.

"She didn't take many, a minimal amount, I would say. But it couldn't have been steroids that killed her. She was trying for a baby and would have come off them months ago."

Mrs Amies-Winter, who worked as a residential care worker, died in her sleep at the Berkshire home of a bodybuilding friend. Her husband found her lying face down, hugging the pillow, on Monday morning. The results of the post mortem were inconclusive, and

it will be a fortnight before laboratory tests reveal the true cause of her death.

Whatever the reason for it, there is no doubt that the world of bodybuilding is indelibly stained by its associations with steroids. However, those who take part in the sport claim that they have been unfairly tainted.

Bill Tierney, of the English Federation of Bodybuilding, says: "It has been over-publicised and made out to be much worse than it is. Most people train in a healthy way and there is only a small minority that might use them."

Steroids are hormones that occur naturally in the body and some, particularly the male hormone testosterone, have been modified for commercial use to increase muscle bulk.

"There is no doubt that they have a massive impact on women because they receive a straight dose of male hormones," said Ms Verroken.

Professor Ray Brooks, Emeritus Professor of Chemical Endocrinology at St Thomas's Hospital, who helped devise ways to detect steroids in athletes, has studied their effects on the body. "There is no

doubt that anabolic steroids can kill you," he says. "They can cause liver cancer in extreme cases and also jaundice because they are actually toxic to the liver. But the most common effect is on the heart, although that is hard to demonstrate because it takes longer to detect."

Regular use of anabolic steroids increases the body's count of low density lipoproteins which causes heart disease, he says. People who have a risk of heart disease tend to already have a high concentration of these LDLs and taking steroids can increase that risk.

A handful of deaths in Britain have been publicly linked to steroids, but they can be extremely hard to detect in the body. In 1994, Zoe Warwick, a former European bodybuilding champion, killed herself blaming the effects of the steroids she took when competing in the late eighties. And in Germany, one former athlete is suing her trainer, claiming that the steroids he gave her turned her into a man. Heidi Kreiger, who began taking steroids at the age of 16, was fed a record amount of testosterone — two-and-a-half times the amount recommended in East German sports scientists' secret manuals.

She said she became embarrassed about going into women's lavatories and abandoned women's clothes. Last year after saying she was turning into a man, she underwent a sex change operation and became Andreas.

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"There is no doubt that they have a massive impact on women because they receive a straight dose of male hormones," said Ms Verroken.

Mike Parry, the secretary of the Hereford Triathlon Club, said: "Jo was a very promising athlete. It is a terrible tragedy."

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The Independent and Independent on Sunday in association with Terence Conran are delighted to offer readers the opportunity to enjoy lunch or early evening supper at six of London's top restaurants throughout February for £10

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Ken and Nancy's rock'n'roll circus

He's the boss – and so is she. But there is turmoil at EMI, the \$4bn record empire. By Patrick M Reilly

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THEY are the anointed king and queen of rock'n'roll. In an industry which artists complain has been taken over by "suits" Ken and Nancy Berry stand out. The couple's home in the Bel Air section of Los Angeles often serves as a late-night crash pad for itinerant rock stars and music producers. It was on the Berrys' patio that five young women with a boom box choreographed their way toward a record contract and became the Spice Girls last year.

He is president of EMI Recorded Music, the largest and most important unit of the EMI Group. His \$4bn empire includes and Virgin and Capitol labels and artists like Janet Jackson, Smashing Pumpkins and the Rolling Stones. She handles advertising and promotional campaigns for artists her husband signs.

But lately there has been tumult in the Berrys' musical kingdom. The Spice Girls helped raise EMI's US market share from last to third out of six in 1997 and plumped Virgin's profits, but new releases from stars such as Steve Winwood bombed. The Stones, David Bowie and Ms Jackson have undersold industry expectations despite their multi-million-dollar advances and expensive promotions. When nominations for the Grammy Awards were counted, the Spice Girls were ignored, which doesn't bode well for the longevity of EMI's top-selling act.

EMI's stock has fallen 21 per cent in the past year after accounting for a stock split as the record industry has suffered through a global slump marked by weak sales growth and slipping profits. Last month EMI warned that poor sales in Japan and Asia would depress operating profit for the fiscal year ending 31 March. As the share price has dropped rumours have resurfaced that Seagram Co or Walt Disney Co may buy EMI though both deny current interest and EMI says it isn't for sale.

Meanwhile EMI's executive ranks have been in turmoil since last September, when Mr Berry, 46, elevated his wife, a 39-year-old executive in charge of "special projects" to the lofty title of vice chairman of Virgin Records America. Virgin President Phil Quarararo defected to rival Time Warner Inc's Warner Bros Records telling friends he was tired of sparing with Mrs Berry over everything from budgets to credit to developing the careers of rock acts.

The high-profile appointment of Mrs Berry only cranked up the volume on the negative buzz about her in the music industry from charges that she owes her standing to nepotism and treats subordinates badly, to more spurious reports about her sex life. Mrs Berry has been the subject of frequent attacks in the press, usually from unidentified sources, accusing her of having affairs with recording artists. Reports of her professional conduct and her alleged affairs so alarmed executives at EMI's parent company in London that EMI Chairman Sir Colin Southgate looked into the matter last summer.

No one disputes Mr Berry's talents in finding new music or his role in building Virgin into one of the hottest labels. But the controversy surrounding his wife has been a constant source of distraction and embarrassment for both the Berrys and EMI.

Mr Berry's future role at EMI has also been thrown into question by new uncertainty over who will take the helm of EMI Group. The board has effectively rejected a succession plan that called for its chairman, Sir Colin, 59, to be replaced by EMI Music chief executive James Fifield, 55. Mr Berry's direct boss and ally, Mr Fifield planned to sign a new contract to lead the company until 2002, after which insiders believed Mr Berry would be ready to succeed him.

But that plan was blown to bits when Sir Colin withdrew his support. Though he didn't return calls seeking comment, people familiar with the company say Sir Colin decided he wasn't ready to relinquish power yet and persuaded his allies on the board that Mr Fifield should continue to report to him. There are said to be concerns that Mr Fifield is angered by that decision and might now leave the company before his existing contract runs out next April.

How Sir Colin will deal with Mr Berry is unclear. Last May he praised him as the leader of "the next generation of management" at EMI. But people close to the company say he has become increasingly critical of some of Mr Berry's personnel decisions.

The Berrys dismiss charges of nepotism and say they are disgusted by the attacks on



Street-fighting man: Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones, who EMI's Virgin label for \$42m

Photograph: AP

Mrs Berry's reputation. He says her appointment to vice chairman was simply recognition for years of work. "She has been in the company 20 years ... She is helpful in talking to artists, she is involved in signings, she knows how it works," says Mr Berry.

He notes that she recently was instrumental in landing Nellie Hooper, a high-profile producer who has worked with Madonna, U2 and Bjork. Virgin is expected to announce soon that it will take a half-ownership of Mr Hooper's new label called Meanwhile

Mrs Berry is not shy about defending her work. "I was certainly responsible for the strategy of working with superstar artists," she says. "I cut through the corporate red tape ... There probably isn't anybody like me who has had the opportunities I had to grow up with a company and learn all the international operations." Mrs Berry concedes that she is demanding but she insists that she hasn't received special favours as wife of the chairman. As for rumours that she has had affairs with musicians, "I don't have sexual relationships with artists," she says. "I have friendships with artists."

Mrs Berry hardly fits the current profile of many corporate record executives where most of the women in top jobs these days tend toward tailored Armani trouser suits. With a mane of black hair and striking features she wears tight slacks or short skirts and holds meetings in bare feet when she isn't balancing on platform heels. Her office is filled with scented candles; a pack of well-thumbed tarot cards sits on her desk. She once had astrological charts prepared for Virgin's employees and found "a high correlation to creative-oriented astrological signs".

But she has earned grudging respect for her ties to artists, video directors and designers to create memorable and money-making campaigns for EMI artists. As for critics who say her aim is seizing more power, she says she doesn't care about titles or corporate fiefs and hasn't signed an employment contract.

Mrs Berry routinely throws late-night receptions at places like the Opium Den in Los Angeles, frequents clubs like the Vault in New York City and slips backstage at Rolling Stones and U2 concerts – activities usually left to the twentysomethings in most record companies' "A&R" departments. The Berrys have forged friendships with veteran rockers like Mick Jagger and rising groups like The Smashing Pumpkins.

According to Mrs Berry the music scene is all part of her job. "Levyn Kravitz is never

going to come to my office for a meeting. I see him backstage," she says. "I am doing that at one in the morning. I spend as much time as I can out on the road with artists." In one recent week, she flew to Miami to be with the Smashing Pumpkins and the Rolling Stones for a benefit, then on to Las Vegas to be with Mr Bowie at a concert in San Francisco to visit Virgin's new hit band Verve. "I saw more than 30 shows on the world-wide tour" for the Rolling Stones' "Voodoo Lounge," she says.

As for her appearance – "I do dress well," she says. "The way I dress is not inappropriate for Virgin or my lifestyle." Mrs Berry blames much of the venom directed at her on the fact that she is a powerful attractive woman in a business still dominated by men. But critics have long contended that she uses her relationship with her husband to further her own interests; as far back as 1993 *Billboard* magazine declared her the "Hillary Clinton of the Global Recording Business". Even investors who follow the company find her role puzzling.

For her appearance – "I do dress well,"

says Mr Berry, meanwhile wins praise as a low-key, determined man who knows when to stand firm and when to bend with petulant demanding rock stars. "Artists should be in the spotlight, not executives," he says and his wife concurs. Last autumn Mr Berry joined Mr Fifield in trying to placate country star Garth Brooks who was threatening to hold up the release of his highly anticipated *Sevens* album because he was unhappy with EMI's Capitol Nashville management.

Mr Berry flew to Chicago for a late-night negotiating session at the star's hotel. Mr Berry agreed to reassess the head of that label, promoted an executive Mr Brooks felt had his interests at heart, and *Sevens* came out as scheduled.

To a large degree, the situation at EMI reflects the uneasy marriage of the unconventional, irreverent world of rock'n'roll with the increasingly corporate world of the record business. When the Berrys started out in the late 1970s at the fledgling Virgin Records, the industry was the wild and undisciplined

incubator (which also served as Virgin headquarters), and Nancy soon became an employee at the loosely structured Virgin.

But their attempts to get a US foothold floundered as they failed to land solid US acts. Chastened, they concentrated in the early 1980s on expanding Virgin's reach overseas. Though they remained based in London, where they married in 1985, Mr Berry gave the US market another shot in 1986, and this time struck gold. Now well-connected in the music business, he appointed American executives who quickly nabbed up-and-coming acts such as Paula Abdul and UB40 and successfully launched Virgin Records America in Los Angeles.

With a few hits under his belt, he pursued turnarounds notably the Rolling Stones, who some thought were past their prime. Virgin paid heavily for the name recognition, paying the Stones \$42m in 1991 to join Virgin.

In 1992, what was then Thorn-EMI put down \$960m for Virgin Records, though its sales were about \$570m and its operating profit only \$40m or so. Mr Berry stayed on as chairman and chief executive of Virgin, doubling Virgin's profits in the first year under EMI after paring back the artist roster. In September 1994, he was moved to bring some of the Virgin "shine" to EMI's operations and was given the new post of president and chief executive of EMI Records Group International, a new unit responsible for the world outside North America.

But EMI's trouble were piling up in the US, and top brass in London and New York came to regard the American company as a "rogue" operation, where executives enjoyed lush perks and high salaries but failed to make an impression on album charts. Last May, EMI ousted 57-year-old Charles Koppelman, who since 1993 had run the North American operations after EMI acquired its music-publishing company in 1989.

After Mr Berry's move last summer, he quickly closed EMI's New York headquarters, dropped two record labels and slashed 125 jobs. The label closings led artists such as Jon Secada and Sheila O'Connor to leave EMI. The company said it would take a \$187m write-down for its US operations and for a then-troubled retail environment, resulting in a 24 per cent plunge in EMI's pre-tax profit for the year ended 31 March.

Meanwhile, as her husband's star rose, so did Nancy Berry's. Working out of London and then Los Angeles, she oversaw music videos and advertising campaigns for Virgin's biggest stars. Warned by her company to hold down costs on Ms Jackson's



Mr Berry claims to be bewildered by the attacks on his wife



Michael Woodcock, a stock analyst with Nikki Europe based in London, says: "We are intrigued where Ken and Nancy's responsibilities begin and end."

The Berrys deny that he simply rubber-stamps anything she wants. Last autumn she fought EMI executives – including her husband – over her spending plans for a David Bowie video. She says she had "heated discussions" with Mr Berry but ultimately convinced him it was worth it. She persuaded Trent Reznor, lead singer of Nine Inch Nails, to appear in the video, hired in-demand British directors Dom and Nick and helped to boost sales of Mr Bowie's latest record.

Mrs Berry co-wrote and oversaw the shooting of the \$300,000 video on Manhattan's Lower East Side. "I can't remember the last time someone of her echelon showed up at a video shoot or repeatedly at my concerts," Mr Bowie says. "Nancy's

1993 record *Janet*, she, with her husband's clout behind her, got approval to conduct an expensive pan-European campaign using television and print advertising. "It was a matter of pushing and coming up with new ways to sell the record," Mrs Berry says. And it worked: *Janet* sold 10 million albums worldwide, and 6.4 million albums in the US.

Mrs Berry also led the 1996 overseas marketing of a George Michael record, "Older", a hit on the Virgin label. But as Mrs Berry expanded the number of artists she wanted her "special projects" team to work with, she began to clash with some of Virgin's top executives, including the president, Mr Quarararo. Mr Berry at times was called on to settle rising tensions between the two, over everything from operating authority to who deserved credit for the success of the Smashing Pumpkins.

When Mr Quarararo's contract negotiations started last summer, he asked Mr Berry to rein in his wife and prevent her from interfering with his operations as president of Virgin Records America. Mr Berry will not reveal what Mr Quarararo asked for, but he acknowledges that one topic on the table was "Nancy's role in the company". Mr Berry, however, says: "We worked it out."

By last September, with Mr Quarararo fielding an offer to take the job of president at Time Warner Inc's Warner Bros Records unit, Mr Berry decided not to sign Mr Quarararo. Virgin staffers and industry executives were shocked when, on 22 September, Mr Berry named his wife vice chairman of Virgin America and Virgin Worldwide. A press release that day said the announcement of Mr Berry as well as a new British executive team to run Virgin America, "followed" Mr Quarararo's resignation and decision to pursue interests outside Virgin. Mr Quarararo made an agreement not to discuss the matter and says he is sticking by it.

Mrs Berry's fierce determination to win often led to clashes with fellow executives. In the autumn of 1996, she eagerly tried to sign Glen Ballard, who produced and co-wrote *Jagged Little Pill*, the Alanis Morissette record-breaking debut album. But Mrs Berry lost the producer to Gary Gersh, head of EMI sister label Capitol Records. Though she denies it, others at the company say Mrs Berry bad Mr Gersh barred from attending a Virgin Records party at New York's luxurious Four Seasons Hotel in September 1996. Mr Gersh will not discuss the matter, but Mr Berry says, "Nancy was unhappy because he prevailed," adding that it was "water under the bridge".

But the most damaging attacks on Mrs Berry began appearing in the press in early 1996, when the *Daily Mirror* reported that she was the "other woman" in a marital split between actress Patsy Kensit and Jim Kerr, singer with Simple Minds, a band signed to Virgin. A spokesman for the Berrys called the reports "ridiculous, just gossip". A brief article in *Forbes* in November labelled her a "groupie turned record executive" and added, "her relationships with many performers – well, let's just say they're unusually close".

Sir Colin, EMI's chairman, wrote to Steve Forbes, editor in chief of the magazine, calling the article's "malicious innuendo ... unworthy" of *Forbes*. But earlier last summer, the patrician Sir Colin asked Mr Branson, Virgin's founder, to talk to his longtime friend Mr Berry about "getting his wife under control", according to a top executive at EMI in London. EMI's chairman considered gossipy over her exploits "damaging to the reputation of his company", the executive says.

Mr Branson confirms that he spoke to Mr Berry shortly after his wife's promotion in September, but would not say if it was at Sir Colin's request.

Mr Berry decided to confront the charges of his wife's alleged affairs in an interview with the *Los Angeles Times* last November. But that only fuelled talk in the music industry where many of the professionals who work for Mr Berry are becoming increasingly alarmed by the toll it seems to be taking.

"I need Ken Berry to be strong and focused," says Miles Copland, manager of Sting and founder of Ark 21, a record company distributed by EMI. "I don't want to see him distracted by some rumours about his wife."

Mr Berry, for his part, claims to be bewildered by the attacks on his wife and the questions about her promotion. "If we knew people were going to write malicious articles we wouldn't have made the change," Mrs Berry says. "This has been destructive to me on a personal level and disruptive on a business level for me."

Mr Berry says his priority is building EMI's roster and improving its operations. "Can we make it more successful?" he says. "Absolutely. I will try my best." In recent weeks, according to people close to the company, he wrapped up the purchase of the 50 per cent of Priority Records EMI did not already own, giving EMI instant credibility in rap-music, where it has been weak.

Meanwhile, the Berrys continue to do their jobs in their own, contrasting styles. At a wedding reception in Los Angeles last summer for a Virgin executive, Mr Berry dutifully stayed through the night chatting with guests. Mrs Berry? She left early to be back-stage at the U2 concert across town.

19/OBITUARIES

Sir James Tait

JAMES TAIT was one of that doughy breed of Scottish engineers renowned both for their technical accomplishments and for their role in the development of engineering education. In 1966 he was the first Vice-Chancellor of the City University, London, and can be said to have created that university through his vision, determination and ability.

In the mid-1950s, the government had one of its periodic anxieties about engineering higher education and designated as "Colleges of Advanced Technology" (CATs) about a dozen of the largest technical colleges up and down the country. There were three in London – including the Northampton Polytechnic, destined to become London's second university. Tait became its Principal in 1957.

The CATs were firmly wedded to the "sandwich" method of engineering education, in which students spent six months of each calendar year in the college and six months training in industry. Tait was a leading national champion of the sandwich principle, which he claimed was first introduced in Scotland at the beginning of the century.

The following decade was one of great challenge and expansion in higher education. In steering the development of Northampton CAT, Tait confirmed his reputation as an outstanding administrator guided by a clear academic vision. He encouraged substantial academic development at the highest levels and supervised the planning of new heavy laboratories for electrical, civil and mechanical engineering. All this was accomplished with a characteristic twinkle of the eye which will be recollected by all those who worked with him.

Then, in 1963, a government report by Lord Robbins recommended that the CATs

should be universities. Of the two other CATs in London, Battersea decided to move out to become Surrey University while Chelsea joined London University. There were pressures on the Northampton to follow one or other of those examples but Tait was determined that there should be a second university in the heart of London, operating in close association with industry, commerce and the financial institutions of the City.

However, London University disliked the idea that any other university should have the word "London" in its title. Also, the new university was not actually within the City "square mile". How then to obtain the title "City University, London"? Easy. Tait persuaded the Privy Council that the word "London" could be used simply as an address. Then, in a brilliant stroke, he and the first Pro-Chancellor, Oliver Thompson, of Shell, conceived the idea that the Lord Mayor of London should be the Chancellor of the university. So, uniquely among UK universities, the Chancellor would change every year. This arrangement got the enthusiastic blessing of the City fathers and set the foundations for the vital links with the City which have served the university so well since then.

When Tait came south in 1946 it was as Head of the Electrical Engineering Department at Portsmouth Municipal College. A year later he went, in another promotion, to a similar but larger post in London, at the Northampton Polytechnic, whose students took London University degrees. Unlike hooks, engineers benefit from translation and Tait's success at the Northampton led in 1951 to his appointment as Principal at Woolwich Polytechnic.

When Tait became Principal of the Northampton CAT in

1957 there were about 800 full-time and sandwich students and 1,200 part-time day students. When he retired in 1974 the University Grants Committee had approved resources for some 2,500 undergraduates and 600 postgraduates involving about 300 staff. During his tenure a huge rebuilding programme had been undertaken and halls of residence brought into operation.

Tait was knighted in 1969 and received a number of academic honours. For 12 years until 1976 he was a member of the National Electronic Council and served on the boards of numerous academic bodies and institutions. He was a Chartered Engineer and a Fellow of the Institution of Electrical Engineers and of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

All his life Tait was proud of his Scottish origins and spent many holidays north of the border. Outdoor pursuits were his great love and at an early age he was active in the Scouting movement. Later, from his home near the Thames in Teddington, he gave many years of devoted service as an elder of the Presbyterian Church on Richmond Green.

Jack Levy and Edwin Harrison

James Sharp Tait, engineer and university administrator; born October, Ayrshire 13 June 1912; Lecturer, Royal Technical College, Glasgow 1935-46; Head of Electrical Engineering Department, Portsmouth Municipal College 1946-51; Head of Electrical Engineering Department, Northampton Polytechnic 1947-51; Principal (Northampton College of Advanced Technology, London) 1957-66; Vice-Chancellor and Principal (City University, London) 1966-74; Principal, Woolwich Polytechnic 1951-56; Kt 1969; married 1939 Mary Linton (two sons, one daughter); died Teddington, Middlesex 18 February 1998.



Ivan Beavis

AS ONE of Coronation Street's celebrated original cast, Ivan Beavis portrayed the widowed bus conductor Harry Hewitt for four years, facing the prospect of bringing up his tearaway daughter Lucille following the death of her mother in a car crash, before finding happiness by marrying the Rovers Return barmaid Concepita Riley.

Often seen popping up the bar of television's most famous pub with his friend Len Fairclough – played by Peter Adamson – Harry was one of the Street's most popular characters and a role that Beavis found difficult to shake off after leaving the programme. "Harry was a something and nothing character and, because of that, everyone liked him," the actor explained.

Acting had not been the Liverpool-born star's first choice of career. After serving for three years in the Fleet Air Arm (1943-46) at the end of the Second World War, Beavis joined the accountants Price Waterhouse's Manchester office, before becoming company accountant for Industrial Models. After contracting TB he was admitted to a sanatorium in Shropshire for six months.

While convalescing back in Manchester, he took up amateur dramatics, working with such companies as the Little Theatre Guilds Unnamed Society. He made his stage debut as an ageing gardener in *Man About the House* but was soon taking leading roles. Eventually, he turned professional.

After arriving unannounced to see the Granada Television casting director Margaret Morris, he made his television debut in the popular situation comedy *The Army Game*, which made stars of Bill Fraser and Alfie Bass. He followed it up with roles in other Granada programmes such as *Skypart*, *Knight Errant Limited*, *Biggles* and *On Trial*.

Harry Elton, who produced *Biggles*, was instrumental in encouraging the writer Tony Warren to create a serial based on his knowledge of life in a working-class Northern backstreet. It eventually became *Coronation Street*, with Margaret Morris as its first casting director. Beavis was cast as shy widower Harry Hewitt and made his debut in the second episode of the serial, screened on 14 December 1960, five days after most of the original cast had been seen in the historic first broadcast.

The serial was an immediate hit and one of Harry's first

dilemmas was the return of his 11-year-old daughter Lucille (Jennifer Moss), who wanted to live with him after a year in a council orphanage, following the death of her mother in a car crash. In 1961, Harry found new love with barmaid Concepita Riley (Doreen Keogh), they married and had a son, Christopher. When, in October 1962, the baby was kidnapped, it gave *Coronation Street* its most dramatic storyline to date and a then-record 21 million viewers.

Two years later, Harry and Concepita were written out by axe-wielding new producer, Tim Aspinall. The couple returned briefly in 1967 for *Elsie Tanner's*



Beavis as Harry: 'a something and nothing character'

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

BIRTHS

JOEL: Charlotte Olivia Hayward, a daughter to Alena and Simon on 23 February in York, 8lb 5oz. All well.

DEATHS

MARGARET Venner, died yesterday after a short illness on 24 February 1998. Dearly loved wife of Cyril, much-loved mother of Margaret (Adelaide). The funeral service will take place at St Giles Church, Gresham Street, Oxford, on Tuesday 3 March at 1.30pm, followed by cremation at Oxford Crematorium. Family flowers only, please, but donations for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, 46 The Green, South Bar, Banbury, Oxfordshire.

While convalescing back in Manchester, he took up amateur

Birthdays

MR FRANK ALLAUN, journalist and former MP; 85; Mr Paddy Ashdown, Liberal leader; Liberal Democrat; 57; Sir Michael Butler, former diplomat, and chairman, Pathway Group; 71; Mr Peter De Vries, co-writer; 88; Sir Peter Emery MP; 72; Viscount Head, former racehorse trainer; 61; Mr Alan Jinkinson, former general secretary; 57; Professor Sir Donald Langford, astronomer and aviator; 90; Mr Mervyn Jones, writer; 76; Sir Hugh Legatt, film art specialist; 73; Mr Edward Luke-Smith, art historian; 65; Mr Ian McCaffrey, general secretary, British Actors' Equity Association; 57; Professor Sir Donald Mackay, chairman, The Royal Shakespeare Company; 90; Sir Geoffrey Matthews, chairman, Hammerton plc; 65; Mr Ralph Nader, writer and consumer activist; 48; Rabia Julia Neuberger; 48; Mr Alan Graeme Pollock, cricketer; 54; Mr Alastair Reid, operatic tenor; 63; Mr George Sarazen, golfer; 96; Professor Roger Scruton, writer and philosopher; 54; Mr Magnus Macdonald Stearner, former Lord Lieutenant of Shetland; 74; Dame Antoinette Sibley, prima ballerina; 59; Sir John Skehel, director, National Institute for Medical Research; 57; Sir Andrew Sloan, former Chief Constable of Strathearn; 67; Mr Kenzo Takada, fashion designer; 59; Miss Elizabeth Taylor, actress; 68; Mr Chief Marshal Sir Sandy Wilson, former Air Member for Personnel and Air Aide-de-Camp to the Queen; 57; Mrs Joanne Woodward, actress; 67; Lord Young of Graffham, chairman, Young Associates; 66.

Royal Engagements
The Duke of Edinburgh visits Southwark Communities Centre, Southwark, Middlesex. The Duke of York visits the Daily Telegraph's new City Club, Bayswater. The Princess Royal officially opens the new David Lloyd Leisure Club at Dartmouth, Devon. As President, the Princess Royal opens the new David Lloyd Leisure Club at Dartmouth, Devon. As President, the Princess Royal opens the new David Lloyd Leisure Club at Dartmouth, Devon.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment moves the Queen's Life Guards Horse Guards, London.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Constantine the Great, Roman emperor; 280; Henry Whitehead, poet; 1875; Dame Ethel Astor, US actress; 1877; Sir Michael Caine, operatic tenor; 1973; John Ernest Steinbeck, writer; 1902. **DEATHS:** John Arbuthnot, satirist and creator of the character "John Bull"; 1735; Samuel Pierpont Langley, astronomer and aviator; 1906; Joan Greenwood, actress; 1987; Linda Gish (Lillian Diana de Gische), actress; 1993. On this day: the first trade mission from Russia reached London, 1558; the British Labour Party was founded, with Ramsay MacDonald as secretary; 1900; Borley Rectory, England's most haunted house, burned down; 1939; the Gulf War ended after Iraqi troops retreated and Kuwait was liberated; 1991. This is the Feast Day of St Almudena, St Anne Line, St Baldegonius of Gaudalupe, St Gertrude, St Hilda, St Heribert of Louth, St John of Gorze, Saint John Cronion, Besas and Eunus, St Leander of Seville and St Theslelaus the Hermite.

Synagogue services
Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in London at 2pm.
United Synagogues: 081-343 0899; Federation of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues: 081-292 1643; Reform Synagogue of Great Britain: 081-349 4723; Spanish and Portuguese Jewish Congregation: 071-282 2572; New London Synagogue (Masorti): 071-328 1024.



"The old voice": Jones in his trademark flat round hat, spectacles, braces, white hair and moustache

Photograph: David Redfern

Grandpa Jones

LOUIS MARSHALL JONES was for over 60 years one of the most popular stars in country music. A singer, banjoist and all-around entertainer, he gained the sobriquet "Grandpa Jones" at the age of 22.

In the mid-Thirties he and Joe Troyan, "Bashful Hammon-Joe", had joined Bradley Kincaid's radio show on WBZ, Boston. When letters poured in asking after the singer with "the old voice", Kincaid furnished Jones both with a new name and with the stage attire which later became his trademark flat round hat, spectacles, braces, white hair and moustache and, initially, a pair of 100-year-old boots. He was a person who was to stay with him for over six decades.

The youngest of 10 children of a Kentucky sharecropping family, young Louis, in common with many musicians of his generation, idolised America's Blue Yodeler Jimmie Rodgers. At the age of 15, playing guitar and singing in the style of his hero, Jones won a talent contest organised by the hillbilly recording pioneer Wendell Hall and found himself in demand locally. In 1934 he joined Lum and

Ahner's Pine Ridge String Band, making the move to Boston a year later. In 1937 he joined the cast of the WWVA "Wheeling Jamboree", broadcasting out of Wheeling, West Virginia, where he was taught to play banjo in the traditional drop thumb trailing style by Cousin Emmy (Cynthia May Carver).

He made his recording debut the same year, returning to the studio on completion of his war service to join Merle Travis and Alton and Rabon Delmore in forming The Brown's Ferry Four, a largely gospel quartet whose work for Syd Nathan's Cincinnati-based King label is now much valued by aficionados. He also enjoyed solo success, cutting tracks like "Old Rattler" and "Mountain Dew" that were effectively to become signature songs.

After signing to RCA in 1952, he found himself recording predominantly novelty numbers including "I'm No Communist", "Herd O' Turkeys", "Gooseberry Pie" and "TV Blues", but balked, perhaps understandably, when asked to tackle "Hey, Liberate".

Unhappy at the musical direction in which he was being

pushed, he then switched to Decca. His output for the label, although limited, included some of his finest work: "Eight More Miles To Louisville", "Waiting For A Train" and the superb "Falling Leaves" which was belatedly issued in 1992.

Label-hopping to Monument, he found himself in the country top Ten for the first and last time in 1962 with a remake of Jimmie Rodgers's "I For Texas", one of several songs by his cut over the years.

Exposure on the burgeoning folk circuit over the next decade broadened his audience as, in more dramatic style, did his appearances on the popular syndicated television show *Hee Haw*. Jones was no stranger to the medium, having appeared on Connie B. Gay's Washington-based show in the late Forties, but his membership of the *Hee Haw* cast brought his old-time music and cornball comedy into millions of American homes.

In 1978 Grandpa Jones was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame. Six years later an autobiography was published: *Everybody's Grandpa: Fifty Years Behind the Mike* which contrasted the highs of his

career – his happy marriage to his wife Ramona, his membership of the Grand Ole Opry – with the tragic 1973 murder of his friend and fellow Opry star Stringbean (David Akeman).

A fellow comic and banjo player, Akeman and Jones had both performed on the Opry on 10 November, and had agreed to meet early the next day for a hunting trip to Virginia. That night on their return to their Goodlettsville farm, Akeman and his wife Estelle were gunned down by cousins John and Douglas Brown in a bungled robbery. Jones found the bodies at 6.40 the following morning.

Over the past few years, Jones continued to appear regularly on the Opry; a duet version of "Eight More Miles To Louisville", with Willie Nelson on the latter's 1995 album *Just One Love*, proved that the octogenarian could still sing and play as exuberantly as ever.

Paul Wadey

Louis Marshall (Grandpa) Jones, singer and banjo player; born Niagara, Kentucky 20 October 1912; twice married (one son, three daughters); died Nashville, Tennessee 19 February 1998.

LAW REPORT: 27 FEBRUARY 1998

Cross-examination of accused was inappropriate

Regina v Gray and another; Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) (Lord Justice Hutchison, Mr Justice Mance and Judge Ann Goddard QC) 20 February 1998

It was inappropriate for an accused to be cross-examined about the content of a document which was inadmissible as evidence against him, such as the police interview of a co-accused who had not given evidence, in such a way as to confuse the court as to the status of admissibility of the document.

The Court of Appeal allowed the appeals of Darren Jobo Gray and Gareth Evans against their convictions at Maidstone Crown Court of arson, being reckless as to whether life was endangered. A retrial was ordered.

It was alleged that they had

started a fire in a church, causing damage valued at £400,000. Both appealed, *inter alia*, on the ground that the judge, when directing the jury on the question of recklessness, had referred to the risk to firefighters and others, whilst the Crown's case as to recklessness had been put on the basis of risk to the occupants of the neighbouring vicarage and nearby dwellings. Gray also appealed on the ground that counsel for the Crown had wrongly cross-examined him on the content of Evans' interview with the police.

David Tomlinson (Registrar of Criminal Appeals) for Gray; Louis French (Registrar of Criminal Appeals) for Evans; Nigel van der Bijl (Crown Prosecution Service) for the Crown.

Lord Justice Hutchison said that the appellants' submission that their cases at the trial had been significantly prejudiced by their inability to address the question of firemen as potential victims, because it had only been introduced in the judge's summing up, was well founded. In the circumstances it was impossible to say that their convictions were safe and the appeals would be allowed on that ground.

The further ground advanced by Gray involved an important point of principle. Evans, who was first on the indictment, had elected not to give evidence. The transcript of his interview with the police was before the jury, and was admissible evidence in his case. The main complaint put forward on Gray's behalf related to the fact that, and the way in which, counsel for the Crown had cross-examined him on Evans' interview which was inadmissible against him.

Prosecuting counsel had argued that Gray if he and Evans were "the best of mates at the time", and had put a copy of Evans' interview before Gray. He had then asked a series of further questions, in the course of which Gray had denied having planned to set fire to the church. When counsel put it to him that Evans had said in his interview that they had planned to do so, Gray had said that that was a lie.

Counsel for Gray had contended that the appellant should not have been cross-examined in that way because the effect of the questions had been to seem to confer on Evans' interview an evidential status which it did not enjoy. He had relied on *R v Windas* 89 Cr App R 258 and *R v Hickey* and others (unreported, 30 July 1997).

The general effect of the

cross-examination in the present case had been to elevate the significance of what Evans had said in interview, and to denigrate Gray's answers disagreeing with what Evans had said in interview. Counsel for the Crown had said that cross-examining in such a manner was not an infrequent practice. Although it could not be said that it would never be appropriate to ask a witness a question about what appeared in the interview of a co-defendant, what was inappropriate was to use the interview, or whatever other inadmissible document, as though it were evidence in the case against the defendant being cross-examined.

The conviction could not be said to be safe. A retrial would, however, be ordered.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

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Rural toffs rally a rag-bag army

ONE MOMENT there was a small bunch of toffs defending an unpopular cause, foxhunting. The next, a mass movement of the countryside came to town to petition the Government with a list of grievances long enough to start an insurrection. From hunting to a whole "way of life", the list now includes the ban on British beef exports, the ban on beef on the bone, the ban on handguns, building on the green belt, towns roasting, dropping litter and trampling crops, the closure of the village post office, the running down of the rural bus service and the lack of jobs and homes for young people in the country.

Suddenly, all these issues have come together. Like one of those rather unconvincing scenes in movies where a small band of righteous protesters find their ranks swelled by onlookers and passers-by, the red-jacketed hunters find themselves at the head of the massed ranks demanding justice for the countryside against the unfriendly, uncomprehending town. Last night the beacons blazed with self-righteousness and all that was missing was the stirring score for violins and a convincing male lead to play the Wat Tyler role.

Let us not be taken in. This is not a new social movement. This weekend's march is a big public relations stunt staged by a group of rich people, many of whom do not live in this country, let alone this country's countryside. But they own much of it and have important vested interests to defend. As we report today, the politics of the march are right, right, right.

The grouse-moor owners, the big farmers and the nouveaux gentry have been astute in recruiting a rag-bag of groups opposed to one change or other – some changes are the responsibility of government, most are generated by economic and social forces beyond anyone's control. What is obvious about the list of grievances from even a cursory inspection is that they are entirely incoherent.

Hare coursing, for example, is a rough working-class sport far removed from the rural idyll of rolling fields and hedges. And the BSE crisis was hardly caused by ignorant urban folk misunderstanding the realities of country life; rather, it was the farmers who eagerly embraced the cost- and corner-cutting imperatives of agribusiness.

The bonfire-burners and marchers are held together by the glue of the romantic self-image of country-dwellers and the cry: "They do not understand us." And, of course, the power of this sense of being misunderstood should not be underestimated. Last night it lit more beacons than the Queen's Jubilee.

Hence the Prime Minister's posture of appeasement. Here is a leader who takes the rhetoric of One Nation seriously. He does not want to start narrowing the gap between rich and poor only to find a different fissure opening between two nations "ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts and feelings". But let us keep our eyes firmly fixed on the real interests at stake. One of the biggest problems in the countryside is the poverty of many of the people who live and work there. If the rural poor are marching against a government that will introduce a minimum wage, they have got it wrong. They should be marching on the gates of their local landowner.

Year Zero-zero looms



IT MAY NOT be the Second Coming, but we will be waiting for the unknown when the inevitable chanted countdown begins in the Dome at 10 seconds to midnight on 31 December next year. Will all the lights go out? How many computers will crash? Will planes, trains and cars stop working?

On the face of it, it seems surprising that a change of date could affect so many computers and things with computer chips in them. The fact that the next number after 1,999 is 2,000 has hardly come out of the blue: programmers have only had 1,998 years to work on it.

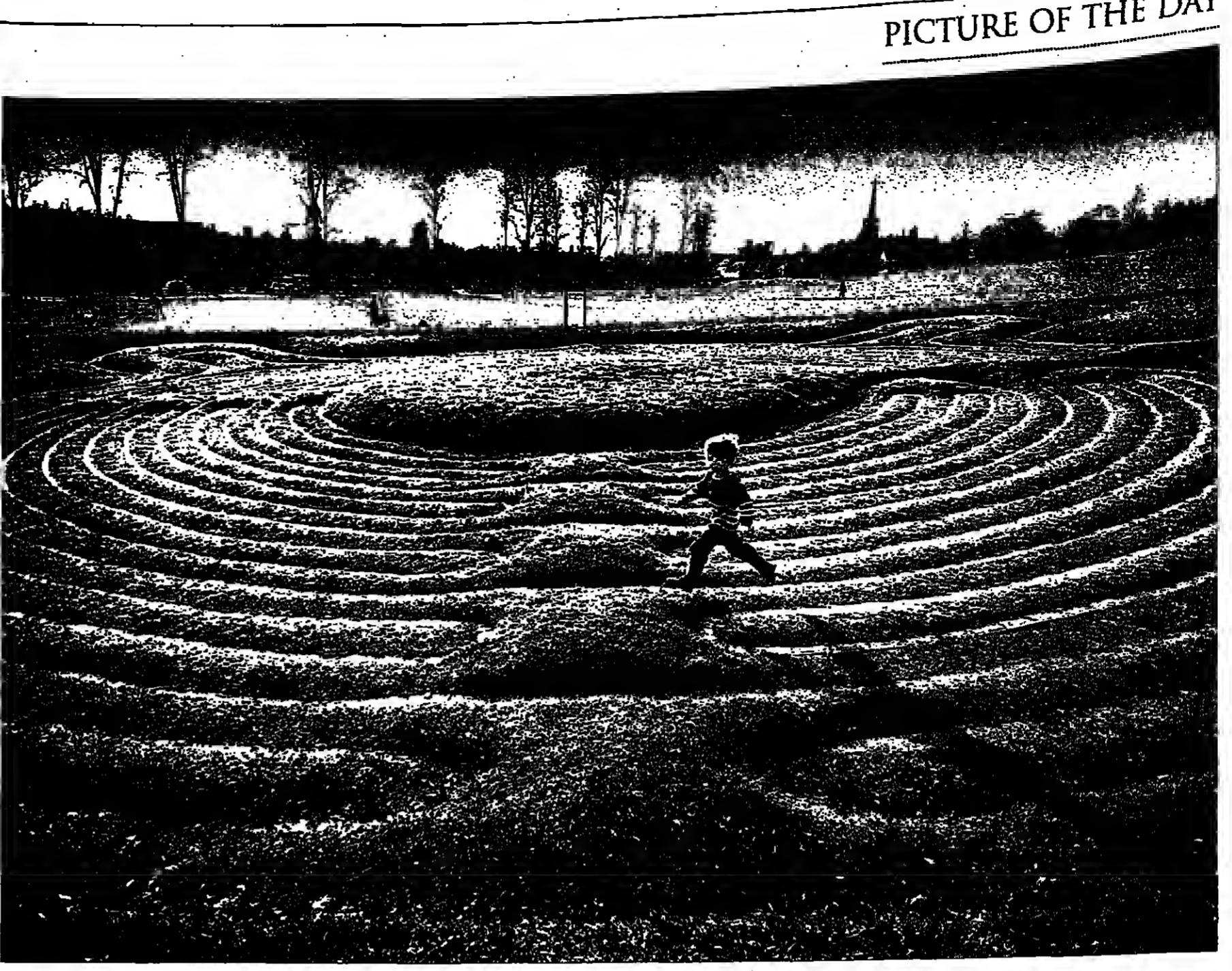
And, yes, there are a large number of computer consultants who have a pecuniary interest in crying wolf, not to mention "global recession". But that does not mean that the millennium bug is not a serious problem.

The reason it has caught us unawares is that the computer industry is built on the assumption that no product has a life longer than 10 years. When some machines, chips, software and programming languages turned out to be considerably more durable, the anomalies had moved on and forgotten all about them. The time-bomb was laid by the exhilarating speed of change which has brought us to the threshold of the Information Age.

The truth is that no one knows what will happen when scattered strings of old code decide that it is 1 January 1900. But it is a conspiracy by computer consultants, then it is a plot which has hoodwinked the Prime Minister, the President of the United States and the European Commission. The millennium bug is on the agenda for the G8 meeting of the industrialised powers in May, and many of the world's biggest corporations have already spent vast sums of money on the problem.

So, yes, it matters. We cannot dismiss predictions of costs running into billions, or forecasts of a world economic downturn, as millennial scare-mongering. But the doom scenario is at one end of a range of possible outcomes. A plausible case can be made that the sudden, panic-driven increase in demand for computer programmers will boost the world economy. It could be that the overhang of every significant computer network in the world will have the side-effect of making them faster and more efficient. If there are more programmers available for hire once the mess of Y2K (Year 2000 to the rest of us) is cleared up, they could drive the expansion of the Internet and the transition to what our Economics Editor has called the "weightless economy".

Whatever happens, the millennium bug is an important issue which this newspaper at least will take seriously over the next 20 months.



Amazing grace: a child negotiates the Saffron Walden turf maze in Essex. Said to be the largest publicly owned example of a traditional English turf-cut maze, it dates from 1699. In 1911 the turf path, 1,500 metres long, was laid with bricks

Photograph: Brian Harris. A print of this photograph can be purchased by telephoning 0171-293 2777

Dome of discord

IF DISNEY had been briefed to come up with a UK Millennium fantasy theme park would the result have been significantly different from that revealed on Tuesday?

It would be life packaged as entertainment, a rock'n'roll reality.

When real life gets you down – public transport run by pirates, hospitals

run down by accountants and schools

not run at all – have a day out. It

would probably have been described as bold, beautiful and inspiring, embodying the spirit of confidence and adventure in Britain" and, naturally, we wouldn't have believed a word of it. But this is a national event, so not being a believer is ignoble, unpatriotic and nihilistic.

This is a slick commercial entertainment product. We're not involved. Where are the sports events bringing in competitors and spectators from all over the country? Where are the design, engineering, science and arts projects bringing industry, schools, colleges, clubs and individuals together? Why are we not customers rather than just customers?

GRAHAM WRATHMELL
Greenwich
London SE10

DETRACTORS of the Millennium Dome are missing the point. The new millennium heralds the future for our children, and the Dome and its contents must appeal first and foremost to them. After all the criticism it was enlightening to hear the reaction of my seven-year-old son on learning the contents of the Millennium Experience: "Wow, it sounds brilliant."

Can we go there now?"

JAN COLWYN FOULKES
London SW15

THE PRIME Minister tells us that Greenwich will be "the most exciting place in the world to be" on 31 December 1999.

It is deeply ironic that the Royal Greenwich Observatory, which gave Greenwich its unique significance, will cease to exist on 31 October 1998, after 323 years in which it helped British sailors to navigate the globe, gave the world a prime meridian, and, in recent years, provided British as-

tronomers with world-class telescopes.

For the want of a fraction of the

sum to be spent on the Dome

Britain's nationalpository is to die just 14 months short of 2000.

LYNNIE MARIE STOCKMAN
Cambridge

MILLENNIUM Dome organisers

boast of the sheer size of the human figures – taller than the Statue of Liberty. However, size is not everything. The Statue of Liberty is the physical expression of the philosophy that defines America. The theme-park nature of the Experience is inappropriate as a monument to the dreams and achievements of Britain past, present or future.

MARK WOODWARD
London E15

WHEN will people like Michael Tay-

lor (letter, 25 February) realise that

all this stuff about the new mil-

lennium starting in 2001 is hogwash?

The one and only reason that it will have

a remarkable year number. Had we

evolved with 9 or 11 digits instead

of 10, then the year we call 2000

would have been oothing special.

BOB PETERS
Leeds

We will however, have no choice

but to back away from our previous

dedication to urban regeneration if

there is a lack of commitment from

local planning authorities to review

their procedures. Many examples ex-

ist in central London of unreasonable

delays and unrealistic demands from

these authorities, inevitably delaying

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Unfortunately, there has been little

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FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

Glaxo ponders hostile bid for SmithKline

By Andrew Yates

In a last-ditch attempt to salvage the largest corporate deal in history, Glaxo Wellcome is considering launching a no-premium hostile takeover bid for SmithKline Beecham after friendly merger talks between the two drug giants broke down.

If the ambitious and groundbreaking deal were to go ahead, Glaxo would assume control of its rival and orchestrate a purge of SmithKline's management, including

the removal of Jan Leschly, its chief executive.

The innovative deal, designed to appease Glaxo's disgruntled shareholders, would mark the latest twist in the battle for control of what would be the biggest drugs company in the world.

Glaxo is exploring the possibility of putting forward the same terms of the original merger to the City, whereby its shareholders would take a 59.5 per cent stake in the combined group. The idea would be to offer

shareholders the chance to realise the huge potential value the original deal would have created, which appeared to be lost once talks between the two sides broke down after a bitter dispute between Jan Leschly and Sir Richard Sykes, Glaxo's chairman.

The group is understood to be planning to test the water by discussing the idea with some of its largest institutional shareholders in an effort to recruit their support for such a deal.

Several large shareholders indi-

cated yesterday they would consider it, in an effort to reap potential merger benefits.

Glaxo is understood to have ruled out launching a hostile bid at a significant premium to SmithKline's current share price. Any such deal would threaten to wipe out the potential cost savings from a merger and have the effect of transferring value to SmithKline's shareholders.

Glaxo and SmithKline stunned and angered the City earlier this week by announcing that merger talks

had fallen through, an embarrassing episode which wiped £13bn off the value of the two groups. The merger was the biggest deal in corporate history and would have created the largest drugs group in the world.

The original deal foundered after an acrimonious clash between senior executives. Glaxo is believed to have become increasingly concerned that Mr Leschly and Jean Pierre Garnier, SmithKline's operations director, were seeking to dominate the company.

SmithKline is run in a centralised

way with Mr Leschly keeping a firm grip on all the group's divisions. That sat uneasily with Glaxo's devolved structure. Although Richard Sykes retains a tight rein on the business, much more responsibility is devolved to divisional managers.

Glaxo was worried that Mr Leschly would have sought to run large swathes of the combined pharmaceuticals group from his American base in Philadelphia. Analysts estimate that a merger would bring costs savings of up to £1.5bn a year.

A combined group would also create a research and development powerhouse with annual expenditure of at least £2bn. City observers were also excited about the combination of Glaxo's and SmithKline's long-term drug development programmes which could have produced a lucrative pipeline of new treatments.

Glaxo's shares rose 19p to 1757p yesterday, well short of 1885p, the price the stock achieved when merger talks were first announced. SmithKline's shares slipped 18p to 748p yesterday.

Fresh setback for Argos as chief departs

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

ARGOS' defence against the £1.6bn hostile bid from Great Universal Stores (GUS) suffered a big setback yesterday when it emerged that Bob Stewart, its finance director, would take early retirement by the end of the year. The surprise news comes just weeks after Argos announced that Mike Smith, its chief executive, was unable to fulfil his duties due to ill-health. The company also lost its director of toy buying last week.

The announcement significantly weakens the hand of Argos whose acting chief executive Stuart Rose has only been on board for less than three weeks. He has barely had a chance to familiarise himself with the company before the publication of its defence document yesterday.

"It will be a concern to shareholders," one analyst said. "The market's perception of Argos over the years has been based on the two-man team of Mike Smith and Bob Stewart. The defence makes much of the success in the past but if neither of those two are going to be there that starts to look quite shaky."

The announcement about Mr Stewart was buried on Page 26, subsection 3 (b) of the defence document, and said conversations about his retirement took place late last year. This was before the GUS bid and before it emerged that Mr Smith was too ill to carry on as chief executive.

Argos denied that Mr Stewart, 53, might have been forced out after a clash of personali-

ties with Mr Rose. It said Mr Stewart was going of his own volition after 16 years on the board.

Mr Stewart was paid £200,000 last year but this will be increased to £360,000 from the beginning of April in order to enable a higher pension payment. He will also be paid a one-off bonus of £196,000. He will stay in his post until at least the end of June, the likely period of the bid.

Argos denied that the developments would damage its chances of survival. "It has no significance for the bid and when we have fought off this unwelcome offer we shall recruit a first class finance director," it said.

The news on Mr Stewart overshadowed the Argos defence which failed to offer figures on current trading or on the possibility of a return of funds to shareholders. Alongside results which showed a 9 per cent drop in profit to £128m, it repeated its view that GUS was trying to get Argos on the cheap. It promised a review costs and the product range which Mr Rose said did not offer enough choice on prices. The catalogue would become "more modern" and the stores made more welcoming.

GUS, which is offering 570p per share for Argos, dismissed the defence and criticised its "nostalgic" reference to its track record: "It merely confirms our view that Argos is a mature format that has run out of steam," said Lord Wolfson, GUS chairman. Argos shares fell 6p to 605p. GUS shares closed 51p higher at 796p.



Cleaning up: Site foreman Bob Black putting the finishing touches to repairs of Big Sister, one of two reservoirs in Wigmore, Kent, that are owned by Southern Water, one of the regulated water companies that are anxiously waiting for the Government's green paper on utility regulation

By Michael Harrison

The water regulator, Ian Byatt, yesterday set himself on a collision course with the Government after indicating that his forthcoming price review would be less severe than the privatised water companies had feared.

Mr Byatt set his face firmly against any profit-sharing formula for the industry and said that the companies would be allowed to delay returning efficiency savings to customers for longer than expected.

The announcement cheered the markets and prompted sharp upward movements in the share prices of a number of water companies. Anglian Water rose 51p

to 843p while Thames added 50p to close at 895p and Severn Trent closed 35p higher at 929p.

But the regulator's stance threatens to run counter to that of the Government which is expected to outline proposals for a tax on "excess" utility profits when it publishes its Green Paper on utility regulation next month.

Mr Byatt said that his review of prices from 1999 would be based on the existing RPI-X

formula remaining in place and not being replaced or complemented by any formal profit sharing scheme.

He also said that companies would be allowed to retain efficiency savings from their investment programmes for five years rather than the two years mooted in earlier discussion papers.

Customers will also have to pay for improvements in the quality of water supply up front, rather than when the improvements

have been delivered, a move which would have meant greater risk and therefore a higher cost of capital for companies.

However, Mr Byatt stuck by his proposal for a one-off reduction in water bills in 2000 and said he was "sympathetic" to the idea that prices should not rise by more than inflation thereafter.

Mr Byatt said his proposals would be subject to any legislative changes arising from the DTI review of

utility regulation. He also said that future price levels would depend on the extent to which ministers imposed new environmental and drinking water standards on the industry and whether consumers would be prepared to forego price cuts to pay for them.

An Ofwat spokeswoman de-

nied that there was any signifi-

cance in the timing of Mr Byatt's announcement – just a fortnight before the Government Green

Paper is expected. She said it had always been planned to issue the price review document in late February and that Ofwat could only work on the basis of government policy as it stood.

Outlook, page 23

Barry Cox makes shock exit from ITV Association

By Peter Thal Larsen

of ITV last year, in a move which strengthens his control over the network as he tries to reverse its slipping ratings. The ITV Association will be merged with the ITV Network Centre and Mr Cox's job will disappear.

Mr Cox said the departure was "perfectly amicable" while Mr Eye said he was "very sorry" to see Mr Cox go.

However, ITV's move into digital television has been plagued by problems, and the network is now thought likely to be one of the last analogue channels to make the switch to digital.

Both those roles will now be taken over by Richard Eye, who took over as chief executive

of Nephew & Nephew, the engineering firm.

Barclays to create 2,000 tele-banking jobs in North-east

By Lee Paterson

BARCLAYS, the UK bank, is to create up to 2,000 jobs in the North-east with a new telephone banking centre.

The centre, at Duxford International Business Park in Sunderland, is scheduled to open in early 1999. Barclays hopes to begin recruiting for the centre in the summer.

Gary Hoffman, delivery channel strategy director at Barclays, said: "Our decision reflects the increasing popularity of telephone banking among our customers. It is vital for our telephone banking service to be able to grow to meet their needs."

Barclaycall, the bank's telephone banking service, currently has more than 600,000 customers. Barclays predicts this number will grow to 1 million over the next two years.

Councillor Bryn Sidaway,

leader of Sunderland City Council, said: "We are delighted that Barclays has chosen Sunderland for this major new development. This is further proof... that Sunderland is an excellent location for businesses."

The news was not enthusiastically received by everyone. UNIFL, the trade union that represents more than two-thirds of

Barclays' staff, said it had mixed feelings about the bank's plans.

Sarah Messenger, a national officer, said: "UNIFL always welcomes the creation of jobs and the North-east is an area where the union has been pressing for a new centre to be located. However, the fact that the union is not recognised in this centre is a matter of major

concern for staff. It is hoped that this new project will not remove jobs from existing staff."

A Barclays' spokesperson said it did recognise the union on issues of health and safety, as well as on grievance and disciplinary procedures. He admitted the bank did not discuss pay with the union.

The spokesperson denied

that the move would endanger branch jobs. He added: "The union ought to welcome 2,000 new jobs. It is good for the region and for Barclays as a whole."

Barclays' two other call centres are based in Coventry and Manchester. Barclays said the bank had considered numerous possible locations before settling

on Sunderland, but had been won over by the quality of the site, the local workforce and the communication links. He said the North-east accent "engenders warmth and trust".

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OUTLOOK
ON ABBEY
NATIONAL'S SUCCESS
STORY, WATER
INDUSTRY
REGULATION, AND
THE INTEREST RATE
DILEMMA

Why Abbey's Mr Birch takes a lot of beating

ASK ANYONE in the City who their favourite banker is, and the answer would be almost unanimous: Sir Brian Pitman, chairman of Lloyds TSB. Over the years, Sir Brian has left everybody else trailing, consistently delivered a rip roaring return. Almost everyone, that is. There is, however, someone who has done even better in terms of shareholder value, and that's Peter Birch, chief executive of Abbey National. He retires this weekend after 14 years in the hot seat and he does so on a high note, with pre-tax profits up another 16 per cent and the dividend up nearly a fifth.

Abbey was the first building society to convert to a plc and float on the stock market. At the time, virtually all the others including the mighty Halifax, poo-pooed Abbey's trailblazing experiment, arguing that long term the customer would be squeezed by the demands of shareholders. But one by one they've followed suit. Only the Nationwide and a few also ran now cling to the mutual tradition.

You can argue until the cows come home about which structure of ownership is best for the customer. As you might expect, Mr Birch makes a compelling case for the joint stock company. But one thing is certain: the Abbey conversion has been outstandingly good for those customers who hung onto their share allocation. In the eight years from conversion to the end of last year, shareholders recorded a total return of 1157 per cent taking account of the movement of the share price and gross dividends over that time. That makes it the best performing share in the FTSE 100.

This is not all down to Mr Birch, of course. In large measure it is due to the fact that when Abbey floated, the stock market had no proper appreciation of how much a building society might be worth. It is also down to the market's general love affair with the banking sector. But Mr Birch has played his part with good management and well-chosen acquisitions. His successor, Ian Harley, says he wants to emulate Mr Birch's achievements. We all wish him well, but it's hard to see how he can.

Indeed, it is Mr Harley's unfortunate lot that however hard he works and however successful he is in his management, his reign is much more likely to see a period of share price underperformance than a continuation of the heady gains of the Birch years. Without another round of far-reaching consolidation, which ministers and regulators are hostile towards, the boom in bank shares cannot be expected to continue. Mr Birch is going to be an impossible act for Mr Harley to follow. The same will be true for whoever steps into Sir Brian Pitman's shoes too.

Watery grave for Byatt review

IAN BYATT is not the sort to fire shots across the Government's bows. The director general of Ofwat is generally more subtle and methodical than that and, in any event, he gets on better with New Labour than most of his fellow regulators.

Nevertheless, what is one to make of the strategy document Mr Byatt issued yesterday setting his face against profit sharing in the water industry and generally indicating that his forthcoming price review will be less harsh than feared?

The stock market lapped it up, marking the shares of several water companies sharply higher. How well it will go down with the President of the Board of Trade, Margaret Beckett, is less clear. Mrs Beckett is keen to include some formula for sharing out "excess" profits in her forthcoming Green Paper on utility regulation, if the DTI can ever achieve sufficient agreement with the Treasury to get the wretched thing published.

Neither Mr Byatt nor any of his fellow regulators much like that, arguing that the RPI-X price capping regime has served customers well while giving the utilities the incentive to raise their game and their efficiency levels.

Mr Byatt's carefully crafted statement yesterday obliquely accepts that Mrs Beckett may take a different view of regulatory needs when her Green Paper emerges. "Changes resulting from the Government's review could affect the balance between incentives to efficiency and early benefits to customers," he says. Shorn of regulese, this means Mr Byatt may have to flush his own review down the pan and start all over again.

The longer the Green Paper is delayed, the more apparent it becomes that its contents are a moveable feast. Since the situation seems to be as fluid as water

regulators can hardly be blamed for seeking to influence the shape of the final proposals. But this is a dangerous game. Some of the regulators, like Clark Spottiswoode at Ofgas, have given up hope, much less interest, in being re-appointed when their terms are up.

And how is Mr Byatt to huckle down to implementing the sort of regulatory regime he has so vociferously campaigned against up until now?

A tale of two economies

WITH BUMPER City bonuses again this year, if not quite as good as hoped for, and executive pay rises running into double figures, it's no wonder one of the South-east's most chi-chi chains of sandwich shops has just put up its prices. A six per cent rise in the cost of a cup of tea in Canary Wharf this week leaves no room for doubt that the steam is escaping around the edges of the home market.

In other words, the evidence weighing against another increase in interest rates is not as great as we are supposed to believe. Manufacturers have rarely been so pessimistic, but there is little evidence that business has collapsed because excessive interest rates have squeezed demand dry.

There are two risks. The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee will be weighing up when it meets next week. To raise rates would be to risk slowing growth to below trend and having to reverse the decision later. The other risk is that of not doing enough to prevent the British economy from running into the same old inflationary difficulties that have plagued it in the past. Its members should try the novel risk of doing a bit too much rather than a lot too little.

Slowdown in growth may be less severe than analysts feared

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

THE FOG of uncertainty obscuring the outlook for the economy thickened yesterday with better-than-expected trade figures, a survey showing a mixed picture in manufacturing and news of a pick-up in the housing market. The latest batch of evidence suggested growth might be slowing less sharply than some analysts have been braced for.

City experts were uncharacteristically vague about how the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee would vote on interest rates next week. "The three members who voted to raise rates in January and February will not have changed their minds. The question is whether another two will have joined them," said Ciaran Barr, an economist at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell.

The split vote on the MPC

in the latest two months demonstrated how close a call the interest rate decision has been. The Bank's Inflation Report said the inflation outlook depends on whether overseas trade slows the economy enough to offset strong pay and price pressures at home.

The shortfall between exports and imports of goods narrowed unexpectedly in the latest month. Official figures show trade with countries outside the EU was £777m in the red in January, down from just over £1bn the previous month, while the whole world deficit narrowed from £1.6bn to £1.3bn in December.

However, the unexpected improvement could not disguise the worsening trend in trade, with the deficit jumping to more than £4bn in the final quarter of 1997. The underlying growth of export volumes slowed to a still-robust 7.3 per

cent in the fourth quarter but was overtaken by import growth of 9.3 per cent.

Against this disappointing background, the Confederation of British Industry reported an improvement in orders this month. Its survey of industrial trends for February showed domestic orders up although export orders remained weak.

Sudhir Junankar, a CBI economist, said: "Exports are still being hit by the strength of sterling." But he added, "The manufacturing picture is not totally bleak."

Further evidence that the economy remains buoyant at home emerged from the Nationwide's house price index, which increased by 0.7 per cent in February to a level 12.9 per cent higher than a year earlier. The building society said the average house price, at £62,770, has regained its 1989 peak.

Outlook, this page

Eidos' entertainment software sales soar thanks to efforts of computer heroine Lara Croft



LARA CROFT, the pneumatic heroine of the computer game Tomb Raider, helped Eidos, the software company, achieve a 329 per cent surge in pre-tax profits in its latest three-month financial period. The launch of its top titles over the busy Christmas period boosted profits in the last three months of last year to £31.3m from the £7.3m it made in the same period in 1996. Eidos, which is Europe's top developer and publisher of entertainment software, said sales of the key titles Tomb Raider 2, Fighting Force and Championship Manager had been "particularly impressive". Charles Cornwall, chief executive, said: "With a significantly better quality line-up of products, combined with the robust growth of both the PlayStation and PC markets, we are very optimistic about the company's growth prospects." Eidos' shares, which have surged from 447.5 at end of August last year, closed yesterday at 1087.5p, up 10p.

EMU first wave stake their claims

By Katherine Butler
in Brussels
and Barrie Clement

FRANCE, Germany and Italy will stake their claims to become founding members of the European single currency today when they submit data showing they have managed to scrape through the Maastricht treaty convergence tests.

With just 44 weeks to go before the launch, the official euro countdown begins today when claims from countries hoping to join in 1999, hacked up by proof of sound finances in 1997, must be submitted to the European Commission.

After months of grappling with the German deficit, Theo Waigel, Bonn's finance minister, is expected to announce a

2.9 per cent deficit to GDP ratio for 1997 which to his great relief, comes within the 3 per cent ceiling allowed by Maastricht. Bonn's deficit will be higher than 1997 deficit outturns announced during the week by Spain and Portugal. The Spanish can boast a minor economic miracle with new figures showing the public deficit down to 2.6 per cent of GDP from 4.6 in 1996, while Portugal's is 2.5.

Even Italy, which has borne the brunt of German and Dutch criticism for slack financial housekeeping is expected to announce that it has brought its deficit down to a creditable 2.8 per cent of GDP.

Eleven countries are bidding to join in the first wave, and if the forecasts for the last three

to announce their 1997 data are borne out, then an 11-member Euro seems a certainty. This will fuel suspicion that widespread fudging has been employed to ensure that, on paper at any rate, convergence has been achieved.

The figures submitted today are the ones the Commission will assess to recommend Euro zone participants. Its report is due out on 25 March and heads of government will make their selection based on this recommendation on 2 May.

Yesterday the leader of Britain's biggest union warned that tens of thousands of jobs would be axed throughout Europe as the cost of the single currency. Addressing the leaders of both Labour party and TUC policy, Mr Bickerstaffe said: "We know that the countries that go forward in the first wave will constitute something of a new elite group. That is why I assume within the Government there is still a great deal of debate and discussion."

Wembley plans to sell stadium

WEMBLEY, the company that owns the UK's biggest football stadium, yesterday said that it was planning to sell the site to the English National Stadium Trust (ENST), an independent group that is supervising the construction of a new national stadium. ENST, whose directors include Lord Shepherd, Grand Metropolitan's former chairman, and Greg Dyke, head of Pearson Television, are applying for lottery money to fund the grand scheme which involves Wembley being closed for two-and-a-half years. However, the plans for the new stadium and will not be unveiled until April, which threatens to delay the project beyond its proposed starting date of mid-1999.

KPMG shows 17% rise in fees

THE INCOME of KPMG, the accountancy firm that recently abandoned plans to merge with rival Ernst & Young, grew 18 per cent to £176.9m in the quarter to the end of December. The figures came as the firm launched its 1997 annual report and accounts, showing a 17 per cent rise in fees for the year to 30 September 1997. Profit per partner was up 24 per cent at £256,000, while the total pay, including pension contributions, of Colin Sharman, senior partner, rose from £771,000 last year to £904,000.

Duty-free loss threat to jobs

ABOLITION of the duty-free arrangement would cost 23,000 jobs in Britain, reduce the number of tourists and increase travel charges by £14 a visit, according to a report commissioned by the Duty-Free Confederation. The study, by the Centre for Economic and Business Research, showed that most redundancies would occur in the ferry port region of Kent and in the Scottish Highlands.

Emap to make radio disposals

EMAP, the publishing and broadcasting group, has put Red Dragon FM and Touch Radio, its radio stations in Cardiff, up for sale. Emap was forced into the sale after breaching radio ownership limits following the acquisition of Melody FM from Hanson for £25m yesterday.

TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2,369	Italy (lira)	2,872
Austria (schillings)	20.34	Japan (yen)	207.89
Belgium (francs)	59.75	Malta (lira)	0.6293
Canada (\$)	2,2698	Netherlands (guilder)	3,263
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8454	Norway (krone)	12.21
Denmark (kroner)	11.10	Portugal (escudos)	295.01
Finland (marks)	8,8532	Spain (pesetas)	244.65
France (francs)	9,6977	South Africa (rand)	7,7916
Germany (marks)	2,9029	Sweden (kroner)	12.90
Greece (drachmae)	459.73	Switzerland (francs)	2,3511
Hong Kong (\$)	12.33	Turkey (lira)	359,923
Ireland (pounds)	1,1637	USA (\$)	1,6028

Source: Thomas Cook
Rates for indication purposes only

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Q: Name the largest mammal.

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28 February 1998. Usual newspaper publishing rules apply. Editor's decision is final.

Smith & Nephew pioneers 'engineered skin' treatment

By Andrew Yates

SMITH & NEPHEW, the UK's largest healthcare group, is hoping to introduce a revolutionary new cure for cartilage and ligament injuries based on its pioneering skin-grafting work which uses human tissue from the foreskin of circumcised babies. The new treatment could eventually prevent the amputation of patient's legs and act as alternative to the insertion of artificial knees.

Chris O'Donnell, S&N's chief executive, said: "We have developed an 'off the shelf' bio-engineered human skin. It may have a wide variety of uses that could transform our company."

Investment column, page 24

National Express director leaves after boardroom shake-up

By Michael Harrison

A SENIOR director of National Express left the company with a £200,000 pay-off yesterday after a boardroom shake-up which concentrates further power in the hands of Phil White, its chief executive. Alan Kelsey, group corporate development director, left National Express "by mutual consent" after a review of boardroom responsibilities left him without a job. Mr Kelsey was on a one-year rolling contract and was paid about £200,000 last year. He is understood to have received his full entitlement.

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

Asia crisis puts a dent in Rio Tinto

SPARE a thought for Robert Wilson. For most of 1997 the chairman of Rio Tinto, the world's largest mining group, thought he was doing quite a good job. The benefits of the 1995 merger with CRA, the Australian group, were beginning to flow through. In fact, Rio Tinto now reckons the combined companies will save \$300m a year on costs - \$50m more than it had previously calculated.

When you're in a commodity business, however, certain basic factors - such as prices - are beyond your control. And since economic turmoil first rumbled across Asia last autumn, metal prices have slumped. The copper price, for example, has dropped by over a quarter to less than 80 cents a pound. Given that every 10-cent-a-pound fall wipes \$100m off Rio Tinto's bottom line, it's no surprise that the company's shares slipped from £10 to £7 in just three months, although they have since staged something of a recovery. They closed up 22p at 812p yesterday.

Potential investors need to ask themselves two questions. First, to what extent will the Asian crisis dent the company's profits? Second, how much of that gloom is already reflected in the share price? Yesterday, Mr Wilson had a pretty good stab at convincing shareholders the crisis is not as bad as it looks. Although 40 per cent of Rio Tinto's sales are in Asia, half of that is in Japan. What's more, even though prices have dropped, sales volumes are still expected to rise in the coming year.

Nevertheless, the impact on economic growth in the West remains unclear. The drop in metals prices has also prompted Rio Tinto to rethink several potential investments, although it claims that all current projects are going ahead.

So the company is thinking of other things to do with its cash. Mr Wilson acquisition opportunities may pop up. Rio Tinto also has permission to buy back 10 per cent of its shares. In the UK, the company will have to wait until Advance Corporation Tax is abolished next year before it can return cash to shareholders. In Australia, however, it's more likely to do sooner.

Uncertainty about macroeconomic conditions shows up in the spread of profit forecasts for the coming year, with rival analysts forecasting anything from a 10 per cent fall in profits this year to a 10 per cent rise - which translates into a forward p/e ratio of

Rio Tinto: At a glance

Market value: £8.68bn, share price 812p (+22p)

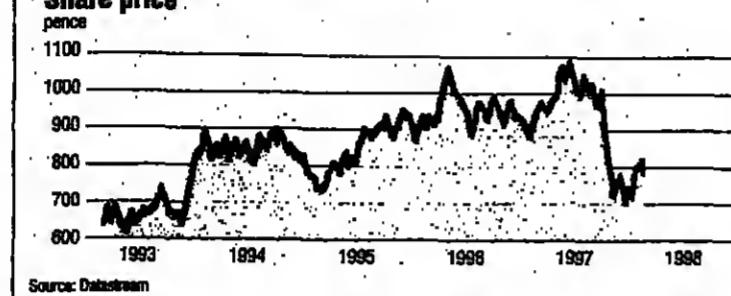
Five-year record

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover (£bn)					
Turnover (£bn)	3.18	5.08	5.16	4.53	4.71
Pre-tax profits (£m)	0.44	1.15	1.42	1.11	1.21
Earnings per share (p)	27.0	55.5	58.4	50.1	53.1
Dividends per share (p)	20.5	27.5	31.5	31.7	31.9

Contribution to profits



Share price



between 14 and 18. The 4 per cent dividend yield is some consolation, but for the time being these shares are effectively a punt on global economic conditions, and are no better than a hold.

S&N has some aces up its sleeve

ON THE face of it Smith & Nephew offers few attractions for investors. Profits fell by 12 per cent to £1.6m in 1997 due to damaging impact of the strong pound and the squeeze on European health budgets as European monetary union approaches.

Earnings are likely to be flat in 1998 as the rise in sterling continues to bite, with more than 80 per cent of its earnings coming from overseas. S&N has put aside at least £500m to spend on acquisitions but it has failed to find anybody to buy at a decent price.

Nor can shareholders look forward to a special dividend or share buy-back. And this perennial bid target has, conspicuously, failed to attract a take-over offer.

But S&N has several aces up its sleeve. Its big hope is Dermagraft, its revolutionary bio-engineered skin derived from the discarded foreskin of babies. S&N predicts it will bring in revenues of at least £150m within three years by helping to cure foot ulcers for diabetics.

If it can be applied to other problems such as leg ulcers or cartilage injuries then it has the potential to transform S&N's finances, although this is years away.

Meanwhile S&N's profits should pick up in 1999 as the effect of sterling diminishes and the investment in Dermagraft begins to pay off. The European healthcare market remains tough, but there are signs of some improvement in the US following S&N's shake-up of its sales and marketing set up.

And, while it is sensibly cutting costs by £25m or so a year it is not scrimping on its research and development budget, which can only help its long-term growth prospects.

Dresdner Kleinwort Benson forecasts current year profits of £161m, putting the shares, which fell 2.5p to 173p yesterday, on a prospective p/e ratio of 17.

That looks about right for now, but if Dermagraft takes off the shares will begin to look cheap.

Walters surges on IT hopes

ROBERT WALTERS, the finance and information technology recruitment group, has had a storming run since coming to the market 18 months ago. Floated at 105p, the shares have surged to 548.5p, up another 58.5p yesterday, and were one of the five best performers on the whole market last year.

Yesterday's jump was on the back of a bumper crop of results showing that full-year profits doubled to £7.7m on sales that also doubled to £91m. Robert Walters, founder and chief executive, has bold plans to increase IT recruitment to 50 per cent of contract staff sales by 2000 from the current 25 per cent. There is even talk of being able to cope with an acquisition in contract recruitment that could run to £50m-£60m, almost half the group's market value.

The company is clearly growing rapidly at the moment but what the City has been keen to know is how well it is insured against a potential downturn, which tends to hit cyclical companies like recruitment consultants hard.

Its answer has been to expand into outsourcing where Robert Walters takes on the recruitment functions of a major company or bank and installs its own staff on site. The benefits are that it provides more secure revenue and enables the company to get to know clients better. From a standing start a year ago Robert Walters now has 12 clients on this basis.

It points out that only 20 per cent of its revenues are from the more cyclical permanent/commerce sector with 60 per cent from contract placements which tend to decrease in downturns as employers seek labour flexibility.

On the house broker's increased forecast of £11.5m the shares trade on a forward rating of 17. There could be some profit-taking after such a strong run but with earnings growing so fast and the stock tightly held there could be more to go for. Hold.

Abbey National shares dive as results disappoint City

By Michael Harrison

AN UNINSPIRING set of full-year results marked the end of Peter Birch's years at the helm of Abbey National, the former UK building society.

Abbey's shares sank by 100p to close at 120p following a bout of profit-taking by the City.

Ian Poulter, analyst at Williams de Broe, said: "The figures were slightly poorer than we expected. The whole lot - incomes, costs and provisions - came in slightly worse than we might have hoped for."

Profits before tax rose by 16 per cent to £1.4bn, although this was before exceptional charges of £145m resulting from last year's changes to the corporation tax regime.

Expenses leapt by 15 per cent to £1.2bn, largely because of the costs of integrating recent

acquisitions and investing in new systems. However, Abbey's cost-income ratio, at 43 per cent, is still lower than many of its high street rivals. Ian Harley, chief executive designate, said he intended to drive the ratio below 40 per cent before the year 2000.

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pean bank but would be interested in buying a [UK] current account book".

A number of analysts called Abbey's performance in the new mortgage market "disappointing".

The bank's share of new mortgage business edged up to 3.4 per cent in 1997, but many in the City were hoping for a figure nearer to 4 per cent.

Mr Harley said that after a poor first half, Abbey's share of new mortgages had picked up in the second half, and there was plenty in the pipeline going forward.

Mr Harley takes over from Mr Birch next week. Mr Birch is retiring after 14 years in charge of Abbey National.

At an analysts' meeting, Lord Tugendhat, Abbey's chairman, said Mr Birch had "transformed the organisation".

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover (£)	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Abbey National (F)	(-) 1.28m (-1.17m)	65.2p (56.5p)	p (p)	
Argos (F)	1.82m (11.88m)	128.4m (141.4m)	33.0p (31.5p)	18.4p (16.0p)
Avon Goldfields (S)	us\$2.31m (55.4m)	us\$0.8m (81.5m)	50c (88c)	20c (37.5c)
Britain T & JH (F)	9.38m (9.35m)	0.827m (0.829m)	29.15p (3.67p)	0.7p (1.4p)
Brent Holdings (S)	(-) (-)	57.1m (71.7m)	(-) (-)	(-) (-)
Brent Holdings (I)	55.8m (70.5m)	6.81m (-7.02m)	4.7p (1.5-3.0p)	n/a
Calderbank (F)	39.1m (40.8m)	2.2m (1.8m)	4.3p (3.17p)	1.2p (1.0p)
Centrica (F)	7.84m (8.38m)	-0.23m (-0.25m)	-17.8p (-24.19) n/a	
Charles (T) (F)	52.6m (48.3m)	2.72m (1.16m)	14.72p (5.88p)	23.11p (4.88p)
Chesnall (F)	50.0m (46.5m)	5.4m (5.3m)	2.1p (2.0p)	1.0p (0.95p)
Diagonal (F)	44.8m (28.3m)	3.3m (2.01m)	13.6p (7.7p)	2.8p (1.0p)
Dicos (F)	32.6m (25.6m)	-0.72m (1.91m)	1.0p (0.4p)	0.92p (0.80p)
Estate & General (F)	14.8m (9.28m)	2.24m (1.54m)	7.8p (8.1p)	0.8p (0.4p)
Evolve (F)	6.50m (5.65m)	2.61m (2.18m)	14.7p (12.2p)	2.40p (2.21p)
KMC Advanced (F)	38.11m (27.35m)	8.20m (6.13m)	11.31p (9.05p)	2.86p (2.04p)
Lamco (F)	722m (749m)	15.4m (20.0m)	3.7p (5.3p)	2.3p (2.0p)
Lex Service Group (I)	1.45bn (1.56bn)	44.0m (31.5m)	25.2p (21.5p)	17.5p (16.0p)
Liberty Inlet (F)	243.7m (221.1m)	128.3m (100.4m)	26.2p (21.6p)	9.60p
Lincraft (F)	20.1m (19.5m)	1.65m (-12.7m)	1.24p (1.33p)	0.4p (n/a)
London Bridge (F)	11.22m (6.31m)	3.70m (2.50m)	10.03p (7.82p)	3.0p
Magnus Power (I)	6.0m (2.5m)	-1.05m (-1.85p)	1.65p (1.50p)	n/a
Mobile (F)	234.4m (242.3m)	16.2m (13.2m)	6.5p (5.7p)	2.5p (2.35p)
Midley (F)	21.1m (16.8m)	2.56m (2.3m)	2.7p (2.8p)	1.2p (1.33p)
Morgan Stanley (F)	331.2m (283.1m)	7.3m (5.2m)	16.4p (13.1p)	5.25p (4.20p)
A & J Middleton (I)	11.2m (10.8m)	5.85m (5.85m)	5.32p (4.23p)	3.32p (3.32p)
Nordic (F)	8.68m (9.56m)	82.9m (1.85m)	.25p (1.65p)	4.0p
Oxford Biomedics (IS)	2.8m (-)	-2.9m (0.85m)	-5.2p (10.4p)	n/a
Ring (I)	44.16m (45.10m)	17.10m (4.50m)	44.2p (7.90)	2.2p (2.2p)
Reo Ties (F)	5.62m (5.41m)	1.21m (1.11m)	53.1p (50.1m)	31.7p (31.7p)
Smith & Nephew (F)	1.04m (1.08m)	152.4m (178.7m)	10.24p (10.92p)	2.7p (5.0p)
Sunderland (I)	8.00m (8.17m)	0.518m (1.08m)	5.59 (12.2p)	1.5p n/a
Robert Walters (F)	90.8m (45.9m)	7.70m (3.9m)	21.7p (11.31p)	3.0p
Swindley (F)	110.9m (120.2m)	9.4m (17.		

Second-liners rampant as Footsie edges to a peak

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

AT LONG last second-liners out performed their blue chip peers. As Footsie edged its way to a new peak, Midcap shares were in rampant form, with the FTSE 250 index surging 60.5 points to a 1,323 high. It was the sharpest advance since September when the stock market got hold of a story that the Government had softened its EMU stance.

The Midcap resurgence occurred at a time NutWest Securities said the second and third-liners were expected to record faster growth than blue chips.

IT shares provided much of the midcap impetus. Logica topped the list with a 107.5p gain to 1,472.5p. Misys rose 145p to 2,570p and Sage 70p to 1,275p. Besides the seemingly heady prospects for computer shares the market was caught on the hop by an acute shortage of stock.

The shrinking pool of shares was also a major factor in Footsie's progress, up 19.7

to 5,764.8. Fund managers are actively chasing shares and with few investors prepared to sell the inevitable pressure is upwards.

The Smallcap index was also strong, gaining 9.9 to 2,457.6, a record.

Utilities, particularly waters, made a contribution. Footsie's advance, after suffering in recent days on worries that the Government planned a much tougher regulatory environment, found themselves floating on a rising tide of hope as the industry regulator, Ofwat, adopted a soft line over pricing which could influence Westminster review.

Thames Water surged 50p to 895p; Severn Trent, said to have been gloomy about the government review, put on 35p to 929p and United Utilities rose 29p to 799p.

Even electricity shares responded. National Grid gained 16p to 338p and PowerGen 26p to 850p.

Elsewhere the market drew

strength from company results although Abbey National was a disappointment, off 100p to 1,220p. Centrica put on 6p to 108p on figures and the prospect of a Panorama Gordon review next week.

Takeover speculation cooled after Wednesday's rampant display but the hunt for possible targets continued, providing a whirl for one of the market's oldest candidates, United Biscuits.

In busy trading the shares hardened 13.75p to 272p, equalling their year's high. UB has enjoyed some spectacular surges in the past on takeover speculation. The shares once shot to 435p on talk of a bid from Cadbury Schweppes. It seemed the two did hold talk but price, not personalities, was the stumbling block.

Signet, the old Ratners, sparked with a 2p gain to 38.75p, highest for four years. An American bid or even a defensive alliance with Argos, fighting a hostile strike from

Great Universal Stores, provided he encouragement.

Lamso rose 20.5p to 277.5p on results. Its decision to pull out of Colombia could cause concern for supporters of Emerald Energy and others involved in the South American country.

"Almost every well we drill there is a success. But they are not just material reserves...

with the capacity to support Lamso's target of 50,000 barrels a day," said chief executive Joe Darby. Emerald, due to report on its Colombian drilling any day now, firmed 1.5p.

Tallow Oil, as stories that its Bangladeshi agreement had finally been signed went round again, rose 7.5p to 156.5p.

Ronson gained 3p to 9.5p on stories that Victor Kiam, the man who bought Remington because he liked the company, would become chairman. The struggling luxury goods group confirmed it was involved in a refinancing but did not comment on the Kiam rumour.

Photofit, the printing services group, gained 21.5p to 325p on the Henderson Crosthwaite investment.

Cot Telecom's remarkable progress continued with an 85p gain to 1,235p. Last spring the shares were 267.5p. Other telecoms were firm, with BT up 4p to 606p and Vodafone

TAKING STOCK

IAE with interests ranging from aircraft to properties in Kiev, held at 112p. Stockbroker Greig Middleton believes the shares are cheap. Analyst Richard Andrews forecasts profits of £3.6m this year with £4.1m next. The company has nine aircraft which are leased to airlines. Its properties in Kiev have the likes of BAT Industries, BP and Deloitte & Touche as tenants.

Pex, the struggling sock maker, slipped to 2.75p after confirming a £1m cash call. It is making a one-for-four rights issue at 3p and buying Sockwise, which is in receivership.

Dealing are due to start on Otex today in Supreme Plastics. The shares were placed at 65p to raise £26.600, capitalising the company at £6.8m.

Utility Cable, responsible for laying many of the nation's television cables, is thought to be negotiating a deal with Energis. UC shares rose 1.25p to 6.75p; Energis was up 64p to 516.5p.



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27/RACING

Libel case: The gambling husband of the trainer Lynda Ramsden now has an extra £50,000 to bet with. Richard Edmondson reports

Yet another winner for jack the lad

JACK RAMSDEN has built a reputation for embarking on a gamble only when there are long odds on offer so it came as something of a surprise when he announced that he was going to sue *The Sporting Life* for libel.

Jack likes a bit of value and speculating in a two-horse race at short odds with scope for heavy financial defeat is not really his *modus operandi*. He must have been quite confident.

The punting icon's self-belief was once again upheld yesterday. The newspaper must now pay costs estimated at £500,000 and almost £200,000 to the plaintiffs themselves, and heaven knows what Jack might turn his £50,000 into at the racecourse.

It may also mean a new leisure pool with slides and fountains for the Ramsdens' string at Sandhurst, near Thirsk. Part of the evidence in this case chronicled the 1989 victory in a Leicester seller of a moderate four-year-old gelding called Arbury Street. His success was most notable for the sum it netted the husband of the winning trainer, Lynda Ramsden. Jack Ramsden invested £1,500 to win and £500 a place at 14-1. The return bought an equine pool at Breckenborough House, from where the Ramsdens have trained for 14 years.

The yard in James Heriot country was little more than a pig sty when the couple took residence. Today it is a Champneys for horses. There are 52 boxes, one and half miles of all-weather gallops equipped with a timing machine and automatic watering system, a laboratory for blood-testing horses and a weighing machine. And, of course, the pool, a symbol to the



The winning team: Kieren Fallon (left), Lynda and Jack Ramsden leave court

Photograph: Dan Abraham

punting shrewdness of the man of the yard.

Not all the money has been re-invested on the horses, however, if this month's fashion parade at the High Court is to be taken as crucial evidence. Back in Yorkshire, Jack and Lynda may also have all-weather walk-in wardrobes judged on the splendid variety of their outfits.

From within the clothes

there were persuasive performances from both throughout. Lynda Ramsden looked nothing less than indignant on every occasion her honesty was challenged, her face contorting most at *The Sporting Life*'s accusation of "cheating". Jack would not believe she was untruthful even if his wife herself insisted on it. "When I set out on this whole mission I always felt I would be really surprised if anyone could ever prove in a

court of law that Lynda was a liar and a cheat," Jack said yesterday. "That's been my main conviction from the start."

"All Lynda wants to have

winners so if I suggested anything like that [betting skulduggery] at the breakfast table she would be mortified. The betting consideration of mine is totally secondary to trying to have winners for our owners."

Jack is not a man poisoned

with self-doubt and he, along with the original author of the damaging piece, *The Sporting Life*'s associate editor, Alastair Down, were not abashed by the grandeur of the highest civil court in the land. They even managed to snatch the slipper out of the headmaster's hand, each firing back unexpectedly under fierce barrister attack.

The bullets, arrows and mis-

siles were flying around Court

13 for almost a month, but the big bombs seem to have been reserved for the body racing as a whole. The sport is cloyingly close, a sort of Waltons on the turf, with a sense of community no other sport possesses. This February, though, at the High Court, racing's representatives have looked more like the Borgias with dripping daggers.

The most dramatic chapter came when Derek Thompson said that Kieren Fallon, the champion jockey, had told him in a Newmarket pub that he had pulled Top Cees. That was denied by Fallon, though the idea that the plug has been pulled on their relationship is not disputed.

The Ramsdens, plus friends, family and legal representatives expressed their relief by negotiating the traffic on the Strand late yesterday afternoon and slipping into Daly's Wine Bar on Essex Street. "We'll have a glass or two of champagne and a decent meal," Jack said, "the same as we've done for the last four weeks."

When *The Sporting Life* team emerged they had the look of men who would not have been worried if they did not manage to negotiate the traffic at all. "We fought a good fight and we got beat and there's no point whingeing about it," Alastair Down said. "It's not been a good day for press and punters."

Ton Clarke, *The Sporting Life*'s editor, added: "We think it is a sad day for racing, but we do not regret defending this action for one moment." Certainly no apology then, but then sorry seems to be the hardest word. Cheating is certainly the most expensive one.

HEARD IN COURT

"Hold the horse up for as long as you can, so he can get the mile [and] six." Lynda Ramsden's version of the Swaffham riding instructions to Kieren Fallon.

"I thought the horse would win as well, but when I got in the paddock Jack told me to stop it." Derek Thompson's version of what Fallon told him in a pub that night.

"He's a lar." Fallon on Thompson.

"Is he allowed to call me a lar?" Thompson's question to judge under cross examination from Patrick Milmo QC for the Ramsdens and Fallon.

"I am not a lar." Mrs Ramsden.

"By and large, they are a bunch of failed punters and tippers, who seem to resent success." Mrs Ramsden on the southern-based noblemen of the press room.

"That man sitting at the back - he's a failed bookmaker and punter." Mrs Ramsden on Channel 4's John McCririck.

"He talks a lot." Mrs Ramsden again, on the television role of McCririck.

"I don't like Mr [Jack] Ramsden much and I steer clear of him." Jim McGrath, Channel 4 presenter.

"I've been married to my wife for 20 years. I don't think my activities resemble some of those that Mr Havers has got up to for 20 years." Jack Ramsden on being compared to Nigel Havers and his eponymous role in *The Charmer*.

"Mr [Mark] Winstanley [*The Sporting Life*'s betting expert], he's got a good reputation hasn't he?" Richard Hartley, QC to the Mirror Group. "What as?" Jack Ramsden.

"I think Jack is a very clever man and I think on occasion he thinks he can outflank the authorities." Alastair Down, *The Sporting Life* associate editor, on Ramsden.

"You know nothing about timing of racehorses. You are talking absolute nonsense." Mr Ramsden to Mr Hartley.

"You know nothing." Mr Milmo to *Raceform* senior correspondent and recruder for 33 years, Alan Amies.

"I have a terrible [disciplinary] record altogether, you could say probably the worst record of any jockey." Fallon.

Champion display from I'm Supposin

By John Cobb

IN A YEAR in which impressive rehearsals for the Champion Hurdle have been thin on the ground, I'm Supposin's 19-length win in the Kingwell Hurdle at Wincanton yesterday was as dramatic as they come.

Certainly many punters thought that the gelding's easy victory over Master Bevel'd represented Champion form and the post-race 14-1 offered by William Hill for Cheltenham was soon snapped up. I'm Supposin is now 10-1 for the Champion with that firm after starting the day at 33-1.

"We had our ground and we had a real gallop as he needed a race like that to put him spot on for the Champion Hurdle," his trainer, Richard Rowe, said. "He's a galloper and could have gone round again."

Strong Promise failed his Gold Cup test when outstayed by Go Ballistic in the Jim Ford Chase. Geoff Hubbard's gelding, attempting three miles for the first time, was still moving sweetly in the straight but faltered after jumping two out and had nothing left as Go Ballistic

RICHARD EDMONDSON NAP: Bunnies Own (Southwell 4.30)
NB: Duke's Mount (Haydock 2.00)

tic and Tony Dohkin powered away to score by eight lengths. "He is still on course for the Gold Cup as that's all he's in at Cheltenham," Hubbard's assistant, Chris Kinane, said. "I would like to think we will see him better there."

Norman Williamson, his rider, said: "It took him five runs last term to get on top and I am sure he will improve for today. I might be wrong but I am happy to be on him at Cheltenham."

Strong Promise is now 25-1 from 12-1 with William Hill for the Gold Cup while the John O'Shea-trained Go Ballistic, last year's Cheltenham fourth, is 25-1 from 50-1.

● Walter Swinburn rode his first winner since returning from his 10 month break from racing at Nad al Sheba, in Dubai last night. The three-times Derby-winning jockey had a dream ride on Ragsak Jameel who strode away for a runaway six-length victory in a one and a half mile handicap. Swinburn said: "It's unbelievable to have such a great ride on only my second mount back. All I can say is that I am delighted".

Results, page 28

Haydock	
HYPERION	
2.00 Hightech Touch	4.10 Elreprey
2.20 DANA POINT (nap)	4.40 Lord Relic
3.05 Even Blue	5.10 Stage Pass
3.25 Green Crusader	
GOING: Good.	
Left-hand course with imposing drop fences and run-in of two furlongs.	
Course is now junction of A568 and M6, Newton station 2m. ADMISSIONS: County Stand £15; Tattersalls £5; Newton Stand £4; Grandstand £10.	
LADIES: 12.30pm. BETTING: 12.30pm. PRIZE: £10,000. Jockey: S. J. Smith. Trainer: D. Nicholson. Owner: D. Nicholson. 14-55 (27%). D Nicholson 14-58 (24%). M. Reevley 13-65 (24%). L. Wyer 11-63 (75%). A. Dobbs 11-72 (55%). P. Niven 10-72 (35%). W. Marston 7-40 (75%).	
FAVOURITES: 6-5. Elreprey 11-2. Ddana Point 11-1. Even Blue 11-1. Green Crusader 11-1.	
BLINKED FIRST TIME: None.	

TWEEDLE DUM "NATIONAL HUNT" NOVICE HANDICAP (CLASS B) 2.00 HURDLE (CLASS C) £5,000 added 2m Penality Value £3,073	
1. DUKES MOUNT (HIS) 10-10 (Ms Clare Smart) D. Hobson 8.10 ...	A. Maguire 8.10
2. HYPERION 4.10 Elreprey	
3. 2.30 DANA POINT (nap) 4.40 Lord Relic	
3.05 Even Blue 5.10 Stage Pass	
3.25 Green Crusader	
GOING: Good.	
Left-hand course with imposing drop fences and run-in of two furlongs.	
Course is now junction of A568 and M6, Newton station 2m. ADMISSIONS: County Stand £15; Tattersalls £5; Newton Stand £4; Grandstand £10.	
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FAVOURITES: 6-5. Elreprey 11-2. Dana Point 11-1. Even Blue 11-1. Green Crusader 11-1.	
BLINKED FIRST TIME: None.	

QUEEN OF HEARTS HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS B) 2.00 HURDLE (CLASS C) £7,500 added 2m Penality Value £5,095	
1. 25-65 ALLEGATION (7) 10-1 (Ms Pauline Peart) G. Richards 8.20 ...	A. McCoy 8.20
2. HYPERION 4.10 Elreprey	
3. 2.30 DANA POINT (nap) 4.40 Lord Relic	
3.05 Even Blue 5.10 Stage Pass	
3.25 Green Crusader	
GOING: Good.	
Left-hand course with imposing drop fences and run-in of two furlongs.	
Course is now junction of A568 and M6, Newton station 2m. ADMISSIONS: County Stand £15; Tattersalls £5; Newton Stand £4; Grandstand £10.	
LADIES: 12.30pm. BETTING: 12.30pm. PRIZE: £10,000. Jockey: S. J. Smith. Trainer: D. Nicholson. Owner: D. Nicholson. 14-55 (27%). D Nicholson 14-58 (24%). M. Reevley 13-65 (24%). L. Wyer 11-63 (75%). A. Dobbs 11-72 (55%). P. Niven 10-72 (35%). W. Marston 7-40 (75%).	
FAVOURITES: 6-5. Elreprey 11-2. Dana Point 11-1. Even Blue 11-1. Green Crusader 11-1.	
BLINKED FIRST TIME: None.	

WELCOME BREAK GROUP HUNTER CHASE (CLASS H) 4.00 added 2m Penality Value £1,523	
1. 25-65 FEELS LIKE GOLD (7) 10-1 (The Independent) G. Richards 8.20 ...	A. McCoy 8.20
2. HYPERION 4.10 Elreprey	
3. 2.30 DANA POINT (nap) 4.40 Lord Relic	
3.05 Even Blue 5.10 Stage Pass	
3.25 Green Crusader	
GOING: Good.	
Left-hand course with imposing drop fences and run-in of two furlongs.	
Course is now junction of A568 and M6, Newton station 2m. ADMISSIONS: County Stand £15; Tattersalls £5; Newton Stand £4; Grandstand £10.	
LADIES: 12.30pm. BETTING: 12.30pm. PRIZE: £10,000. Jockey: S. J. Smith. Trainer: D. Nicholson. Owner: D. Nicholson. 14-55 (27%). D Nicholson 14-58 (24%). M. Reevley 13-65 (24%). L. Wyer 11-63 (75%). A. Dobbs 11-72 (55%). P. Niven 10-72 (35%). W. Marston 7-40 (75%).	
FAVOURITES: 6-5. Elreprey 11-2. Dana Point 11-1. Even Blue 11-1. Green Crusader 11-1.	
BLINKED FIRST TIME: None.	

W. LANGENBERGER HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS C) 3.05 £7,000 added 3m Penality Value £5,016	
1. 25-65 W. LANGENBERGER (7) 10-1	

European Indoor Athletics Championships: Britain's best hopes of winning gold rest with the elevated and the eccentric

Edwards back in the form to make new mark

Triple jumper returns to the country where his assault on the world record began. Simon Turnbull reports from Valencia

IT WAS in Spain three years ago that Jonathan Edwards first hopped, stepped and jumped into the world record books. The scoreboard in the Estadio Javier Sotomayor in Salamanca flashed up the distance 17.98m and the beaming Briton was greeted by Mike Powell, the man who consigned Bob Beamon's long jump to history, with the words: "Welcome to the club."

Edwards returned to Spain last night with the intention of taking out another subscription to the world record breakers' club. The outdoor triple jump record remains in his name; a month after his trip to Salamanca he improved it to first 18.16m, then 18.29m, at the 1995 World Championships in Gothenburg. Now the spring-heeled Gateshead Harrier wants the indoor mark to complete a matching set of membership cards.

The indications are that he will get it here in Spain's third city in the 25th European Indoor Championships, which open this morning and run until Sunday. Having jumped 17.64m while suffering the after effects of flu to claim Keith Connor's antique British indoor best in Birmingham a fortnight ago, Edwards would appear to be within range of the 17.83m Aliecer Urtua of Cuba achieved in Sindelfingen 11 months ago.

"The world record certainly isn't an unrealistic proposition," he said. "Hopefully I'm in 17.80m or 17.90m shape. I surprise myself how far I jumped in Birmingham. It's given me a lot of confidence for this weekend."

Four to follow

JUDY OAKES

The three teenagers in the Great Britain team - high jumpers Susan Jones and Ben Challenger and sprinter Dwan Chambers - were all babes yet to celebrate their first birthdays when the veteran shot-putter took the bronze medal in the 1979 Championships in Vienna. Now 40, the Croydon Harrier wins her 80th British vest here.

TERESA KIESL

The top-ranked entrant for the women's 1500 metres, the Austr-

If he achieved the landmark indoor distance of 18m it would be a strong indication that, at 31 and after two years of frustrated ambition, Edwards' best days may still lie ahead of him. Those who have pointed to his ground-breaking 1995 season as a fading peak have ignored the fact that his last-round jump at the Atlanta Olympics would probably have improved his world record

- had he not strayed fractionally over the take-off board - and that his silver medal performance at the World Championships in Athens last summer came after six weeks out of action with an injured heel.

Edwards goes into the qualifying rounds tonight 40cm ahead of his closest rival on current form: Denis Kapustin of Russia. He is also the most likely Briton to strike Spanish gold in the Luis Puig Palacio de los Deportes but by no means the only sparkling prospect.

After two summers of silver-linings, in Atlanta and in Athens, the British team could return to the gold standard with a vengeance here in the city famously wrested from the Moors by El Cid and conquered by Gerry Armstrong, with his winning goal for Northern Ireland against the hosts, in the 1982 World Cup.

Jones spoke yesterday about the potential dawning of "a new golden era" and it is entirely possible that the five gold medals won by the British team in the 1994 championships in Paris could be matched by the 1998 squad. Like Edwards, Julian Golding (in the 200m) and Solomon Wariso (in the 400m)

Yesterd

So, in the 400m, does Wariso, whose last European challenge ended before it had even started. The Haringey sprinter was sent home from the outdoor championships in Helsinki four years ago when it was discovered he had been inadvertently powered by the banned stimulant ephedrine, derived from a herbal tonic given to him by team-mates.

Yesterday, Wariso drew strength from a different source as he spoke of his new career as a reluctant but thus far successful 400m runner. The double left behind on his notepad was the Superman sign.

an competes under a family cloud. Her body-builder husband, Manfred, with whom she runs a gym in Linz, was last month charged with the possession of illegal drugs. Anabolic steroids and human growth hormone was found in a fridge at the Kiesl's home in Traun.

STELLA JONGMANS

Championship races are free from rabbits of the pace-making variety, but the field for the women's 800m happens to include this former Bunny Girl. Ranked fourth in Europe this winter, the 26-year-old Dutch woman earns her living as a runner these days. She is, though, sponsored by Playboy.

GRIT BREUR

Twice banned for contravening anti-doping rules, the German 400m runner is still chasing international gold. Her original suspension, for tampering with a urine sample, was overturned by the German federation. And since serving a three-year ban for using Clenbuterol she has returned to the top of the European rankings.



Solomon Wariso, science-fiction writer and video maker

Photograph: Robert Hallam

Wariso looks at home in alien dimension

Adam Szerter enters the weird world of the British sprinter Solomon Wariso

IF THE art of becoming a star is believing that you are, then Solomon Wariso does not have far to go. Only time will tell whether it is as an athlete, or a writer, or any other vocation this immensely likeable and obviously talented Londoner chooses to pursue. But if it is to be as a sprinter then, at 31, Wariso knows time is running out.

After two minutes' conversation with Wariso you would be ready to believe anything. He talks like he runs - extremely fast.

Born in Portsmouth of Nigerian parents - his father was in the Navy - the family moved to London in 1971. A late developer, Wariso's first brush with fame was of the notorious variety when he was sent home from the 1994 European Championships after traces of ephedrine were detected in his body. He had been given what he probably thought was a harmless stimulant called Up Your Gas although Wariso with upped gas is a frightening thought. Understandably, perhaps, he is now reluctant to discuss it. "That's all anyone asks me about, and I'm not talking about it," he said.

Four years later, after recovering from the mental damage of his three-month ban as well as various injuries, Wariso has come almost full circle. "In '96 I was walking around with a big lump sticking out of my groin," he kindly explained. "I think I was training too heavy, plus I had a hernia operation in '97 and the scar tissue had hardened. It was jagged and I was on painkillers all the time."

"Then I had an Achilles problem and I dropped a 20-kilo weight on my big toe in training and crushed it, so I took last year off, just dosing and stuff, writing and making a video with a friend about scooters." The writing he refers to extends to a burgeoning career as a freelance journalist and he has even written a film script called Sweet Dreams of Escape.

"It's a sci-fi film," he said. "The guys I was working with thought I was on acid because they think all my ideas are a bit weird, which is true. It's set on an alternative earth in another dimension in 1998 but they're

about 500 years ahead of us.

They're on Mars, on the moon, there's a big tunnel that connects America to Britain, a race of 35-40 British genetically engineered superhumans created by the Government, like Interplanetary Rescue. The world's getting ripped apart and I've got to go to other dimensions to fight aliens. That's it basically."

Back in the establishment world, a tunnel under the Atlantic would suit Wariso just fine now as much of his Lottery grant is spent on travelling to America to train under Nigeria's Commonwealth 400 metres record holder, Innocent Egbunike. Wariso himself has switched to the longer sprint so far this season with outrageous success, running the year's best time at his very first attempt. But although he lines up in the 400m heats at the European Indoor Championships in Valencia today, and should be among the favourites for Sunday's final, he has not completely forsaken the 200.

"People say I've given up the 200, but I haven't," he insisted. "I know I'm good enough to be British No 1 in the 200 and in the top two or three in the 400. But remember I'm 31, and when you do the 400 metres year in year out, your body's going to break down. As I've come into it relatively late, I've had a few years off with injuries and when I couldn't really be bothered, I should still be quite fresh."

He would like to attempt both events at this year's European Championships in Budapest, à la Michael Johnson, but the schedule prevents it so he intends to run one, Budapest and the other at the Commonwealth Games in Malaysia. But what makes him think he will find the kind of sustained motivation he has often lacked in the past?

"I'm getting married this year," he replies, finding a photograph of his Australian fiancée Vicki. "She doesn't want to have a slacker on her hands. I've been a slacker too long, know what I mean?" It is hard for anyone to know exactly what Wariso means, but you get the impression he means well. Whether he means business is another matter.

Acton man to make debut for Broncos

By Dave Hadfield

THE London Broncos will unveil the latest of their home-grown players in Sunday's Silk Cut Challenge Cup match against Halifax.

Dominic Peters, a teenager from Acton who can play in the pack or on the wing, is in the squad for the tie at The Stoop. He has played for the club's highly successful under-19 side and becomes another English addition to what is still a largely Australian roster. One of those imports, the former Perth half-back, Damien Chapman, makes his competitive debut.

The administration of Super League also took on an Australian hue yesterday, with the arrival of Ian Robson to take up the role of marketing and public affairs director. Robson has the unique distinction of occupying high-profile jobs in three countries within a few months. He was a controversial chief executive of the Auckland Warriors until forced out midway through last season and was then head of the marketing operation for Super League in Australia.

What we will do with Super League Europe is what we tried to achieve with Super League in Australasia - to put on the best of the best, week in, week out, and make it so good that everyone wants to read about it and hear about it," he said.

Doc Murray, the former Auckland full-back who failed to establish himself at Wigan last season, has joined Lancashire Lynx on loan. Murray had been playing trials with Wasps.

The Castleford utility player, Grant Anderson, has completed his move to Hunslet.

Cumbria's Rangers put on a brave face

Dave Hadfield tracks down Ellenborough and Egremont, two amateur clubs making history in rugby league's Challenge Cup

players on the way, for a bit of moral support.

The Rangers of Ellenborough and the Rangers of Egremont will be doing what no two amateur sides have ever done simultaneously - competing against the big boys in the last 16 of the Silk Cut Challenge Cup.

The two very different clubs have few illusions about what lies ahead at Hull and Sheffield respectively. There are no extravagant promises, just a determination to make sure that a glorious adventure does not end in humiliation.

For a club that has dominated what is still called the Cumberland League, Ellenborough prove surprisingly difficult to find, partly because they are not based in Ellenborough, the village tagged on to the old coal harbour of Maryport, at all.

The first two people consulted in Ellenborough - or Elbra, as it is always pronounced and often written - deny all knowledge of the club. A third reveals that it is over the other side of the railway tracks, opposite Maryport's Spa supermarket and BP garage, "with a big wa' round it".

That is just about what Ellenborough Rangers have to their name: a pitch with a wa' round it - not theirs but rented - and a working men's club half a mile away where they get changed. That and a team that has knocked two professional clubs, Bramley and Hunslet, out of the Challenge Cup.

Their player-coach, Gary Murdock, makes his way to the Millots ground to meet us and flags down a couple of other

"We've had over 3,000 on this field," says Murdock. "Six or seven deep all round the touchline and loads too tight to pay their quid watching over the wa'."

Many of Ellenborough's players are in the building trade, kept busy by the restoration of a harbour that used to ship coal and iron rails all over the world.

Ellenborough have nowhere of their own to train on winter nights, relying on a dimly flooded rectangle of shale at the nearby Maryport club.

After seeing the unpromising circumstances from which one set of Rangers have fashioned their success, Egremont, down the coast, look like the Brisbane Broncos by comparison.

Egremont might be home to

the World Gurning Championships, but like Maryport,

they are an organisation with deeper roots than Ellenborough - "They do a lot of posh work."

Egremont have been here since 1900 and, for much of that time, there has been a Reid involved. Jackie Reid MBE played his first game for them in 1949, before spending 10 years with Whitehaven and going on to manage Great Britain at amateur level.

His son, Paul, is now secretary and his grandson, Mark, plays for the under-eights, one of nine teams Egremont run.

They are an organisation with different circumstances, would have moved across by now.

Their attitude to that trip is similar to Elbra's.

"They've got a very strong side and you've got to be realistic," says Paul. He and his dad have their eyes on a stretch of meadow alongside their pitch which could be turned into an all-weather training area and both hope has a major sponsor for the club.

Most of all, they do not want to leave the coachloads of supporters from the gurning capital of the world with long faces.

Egremont have a different problem. "We can't find any buses," says Murdock. "They're all booked up for that hunt demo in London."

The two Rangers have already hunted for bigger prey. If they get home on Sunday night without a mauling, it will have been a successful foray.



Family affair: Egremont Rangers' Jackie and Paul Reid

Racing results

WINCANTON

4.00: 1. COOL GUNNER (P McCoy) 9-4
Inv. 2. Mustang Scally 8-1; 3. Wonton 7-1; 4. King of Kings 7-1; 5. Mr. Big 7-1; 6. King of Swindon 7-1; 7. Cossack 6-1; 8. Mr. Big 6-1; 9. Mr. Big 6-1; 10. Mr. Big 6-1; 11. Mr. Big 6-1; 12. Mr. Big 6-1; 13. Mr. Big 6-1; 14. Mr. Big 6-1; 15. Mr. Big 6-1; 16. Mr. Big 6-1; 17. Mr. Big 6-1; 18. Mr. Big 6-1; 19. Mr. Big 6-1; 20. Mr. Big 6-1; 21. Mr. Big 6-1; 22. Mr. Big 6-1; 23. Mr. Big 6-1; 24. Mr. Big 6-1; 25. Mr. Big 6-1; 26. Mr. Big 6-1; 27. Mr. Big 6-1; 28. Mr. Big 6-1; 29. Mr. Big 6-1; 30. Mr. Big 6-1; 31. Mr. Big 6-1; 32. Mr. Big 6-1; 33. Mr. Big 6-1; 34. Mr. Big 6-1; 35. Mr. Big 6-1; 36. Mr. Big 6-1; 37. Mr. Big 6-1; 38. Mr. Big 6-1; 39. Mr. Big 6-1; 40. Mr. Big 6-1; 41. Mr. Big 6-1; 42. Mr. Big 6-1; 43. Mr. Big 6-1; 44. Mr. Big 6-1; 45. Mr. Big 6-1; 46. Mr. Big 6-1; 47. Mr. Big 6-1; 48. Mr. Big 6-1; 49. Mr. Big 6-1; 50. Mr. Big 6-1; 51. Mr. Big 6-1; 52. Mr. Big 6-1; 53. Mr. Big 6-1; 54. Mr. Big 6-1; 55. Mr. Big 6-1; 56. Mr. Big 6-1; 57. Mr. Big 6-1; 58. Mr. Big 6-1; 59. Mr. Big 6-1; 60. Mr. Big 6-1; 61. Mr. Big 6-1; 62. Mr. Big 6-1; 63. Mr. Big 6-1; 64. Mr. Big 6-1; 65. Mr. Big 6-1; 66. Mr. Big 6-1; 67. Mr. Big 6-1; 68. Mr. Big 6-1; 69. Mr. Big 6-1; 70. Mr. Big 6-1; 71. Mr. Big 6-1; 72. Mr. Big 6-1; 73. Mr. Big 6-1; 74. Mr. Big 6-1; 75. Mr. Big 6-1; 76. Mr. Big 6-1; 77. Mr. Big 6-1; 78. Mr. Big 6-1; 79. Mr. Big 6-1; 80. Mr. Big 6-1; 81. Mr. Big 6-1; 82. Mr. Big 6-1; 83. Mr. Big 6-1; 84. Mr. Big 6-1; 85. Mr. Big 6-1; 86. Mr. Big 6-1; 87. Mr. Big 6-1; 88. Mr. Big 6-1; 89. Mr. Big 6-1; 90. Mr. Big 6-1; 91. Mr. Big 6-1; 92. Mr. Big 6-1; 93. Mr. Big 6-1; 94. Mr. Big 6-1; 95. Mr. Big 6-1; 96. Mr. Big 6-1; 97. Mr. Big 6-1; 98. Mr. Big 6-1; 99. Mr. Big 6-1; 100. Mr. Big 6-1; 101. Mr. Big 6-1; 102. Mr. Big 6-1; 103. Mr. Big 6-1; 104. Mr. Big 6-1; 105. Mr. Big 6-1; 106. Mr. Big 6-1; 107. Mr. Big 6-1; 108. Mr. Big 6-1; 109. Mr. Big 6-1; 110. Mr. Big 6-1; 111. Mr. Big 6-1; 112. Mr. Big 6-1; 113. Mr. Big 6-1; 114. Mr. Big 6-1; 115. Mr. Big 6-1; 116. Mr. Big 6-1; 117. Mr. Big 6-1; 118. Mr. Big 6-1; 119. Mr. Big 6-1; 120. Mr. Big 6-1; 121. Mr. Big 6-1; 122. Mr. Big 6-1; 123. Mr. Big 6-1; 124. Mr. Big 6-1; 125. Mr. Big 6-1; 126. Mr. Big 6-1; 127. Mr. Big 6-1; 128. Mr. Big 6-1; 129. Mr. Big 6-1; 130. Mr. Big 6-1; 131. Mr. Big 6-1; 132. Mr. Big 6-1; 133. Mr. Big 6-1; 134. Mr. Big 6-1; 135. Mr. Big 6-1; 136. Mr. Big 6-1; 137. Mr. Big 6-1; 138. Mr. Big 6-1; 139. Mr. Big 6-1; 140. Mr. Big 6-1; 141. Mr. Big 6-1; 142. Mr. Big 6-1; 143. Mr. Big 6-1; 144. Mr. Big 6-1; 145. Mr. Big 6-1; 146. Mr. Big 6-1; 147. Mr. Big 6-1; 148. Mr. Big 6-1; 149. Mr. Big 6-1; 150. Mr. Big 6-1;

Champion jockey wins libel case

Racing

By Greg Wood

KIEREN FALLON, the champion Flat jockey, the trainer Lynda Ramsden and ridden by Fallon, had won the Chester Cup by five lengths. In a comment column under the headline "Contempt For The Punter" written by Alastair Down, the newspaper's associate editor, it was alleged that the Ramsdens and Fallon had been "cheating" when the same horse finished fifth at Newmarket three weeks earlier.

Yesterday, the jury decided unanimously that the words complained of were neither

substantially true nor fair comment in the case of Mrs Ramsden. They returned the same verdict in respect of both Mr Ramsden and Fallon, though by a majority verdict of 10 to two. They were unanimous, however, that the accusation had been published without malice.

Jack Ramsden said afterwards that "when we set out on this mission I felt that I'd be really surprised if anyone ever came to a court of law and said Lynda was a liar and a cheat. We've been proved right because she was the only one who got the 12-0 verdict on all counts."

The most dramatic moment in the trial was the evidence given by Derek Thompson, the Channel 4 racing presenter. He told the court that during a conversation in a pub Fallon had admitted "pulling" Top Cees at Newmarket. Fallon described Thompson's story as a "lie" when he returned to the stand.

Jack Ramsden said: "What he did to come in at the 11th hour like that and tell that story was utterly contemptible. Every jockey may feel extremely doubtful about talking to Mr Thompson and I endorse that." Thompson, working for

Channel 4 yesterday, said: "I was very disappointed with the judge's summing up when he said to the jury that they should exercise caution with my testimony. I feel I have been made a scapegoat but I had a lot of calls from top owners, trainers and jockeys offering support and I am very thankful to them."

Jack Ramsden added: "The suggestion has always been that we are cooking a snook at the Jockey Club and I feel that in this case we've been on the same side. They might not like to think of us as bed partners but I feel we were on the same side."

Punters, he said, "can follow our horses in the safe knowledge that they are trying."

Lynda Ramsden said that she had been "horrified to think that some people think we are liars and cheats".

Fallon was not in court for the verdict but was informed of the decision at Lingfield where he was due to ride shortly afterwards. Master Caster, an even-money favourite, provided him with his second win in the space of 15 minutes.

Tom Clarke, the editor of *The Sporting Life*, said that the newspaper was "bitterly disap-

FA anger
at ticket
share for
France 98

Football

By Phil Casey

THE Football Association last night promised to do "everything in its power" to obtain more World Cup tickets for England fans after disappointing distributions were announced.

The FA reacted with "dismay and astonishment" as it learned of the smaller than expected allocation of tickets for the group matches in France. England will receive only 9,128 tickets from a total number of 138,000 for the three group games to distribute via the 27,000-strong official England Travel Club. For the match in Marseilles against Tunisia, (capacity 60,000), 3,790 tickets are available; against Romania in Toulouse, (capacity 37,000) 2,749 tickets; against Colombia in Lens (capacity 41,000) 2,589 tickets have been allocated.

It had been hoped that 150,000 extra tickets being made available by Fifa, world football's ruling body, would increase those numbers significantly. But the FA's director of external affairs, David Davies, revealed only a few hundred more tickets at most would be given to England.

"We feel this cannot be the final allocation," Davies said. "We have been told unofficially there will be up to 150,000 extra tickets to be shared around the participating countries in the early rounds. But in our case our understanding is that those allocations will be increased by only a few hundred."

Scotland will have about 5,000 tickets for their opening match against the holders, Brazil, on 10 June at the new Stade de France, but they will only receive 2,000 for each of their two other group matches, against Norway, in Bordeaux on 16 June, and against Morocco, in St-Etienne on 23 June.

• The Liverpool and England striker Robbie Fowler will be out for at least six months with the knee injury he suffered on Monday in the derby against Everton. Doctors found he had torn his cruciate ligament as well as the medial. His knee will be in a cast for three months.

More football, page 29



Kidology: Mike Atherton takes part in a game of 'Kwik Cricket' at an orphanage in Georgetown, Guyana, ahead of today's Test

Photograph: Allsport

Atherton may bow to El Niño effect

Cricket

Derek Pringle
reports from Georgetown, Guyana

THERE was a solar eclipse here yesterday but it did not obscure the fact that spin is likely to play an important part in today's Test match. But if most eyes were looking upwards for a glimpse of the unusual, those peering down at the parched Bourda pitch saw a far rarer sight in this part of the world - a surface that appears to favour spin over pace.

England, despite the desiccated conditions, are not yet entirely committed to playing two front-line spinners. With Mark Ramprakash replacing John Crawley to bat at No 3, the batting places are settled. Indeed, only one berth remains unresolved and Michael Atherton, set to captain his 50th Test, will have another look at the hone dry pitch this morning before choosing between the off-spin of Robert Croft and the pace of either Dean Headley or Andy Caddick.

Asked if the pitch was a lot drier than the one here four years ago, Atherton replied: "Everywhere's a lot drier. Last time we had a lot of rain before the match" - rain that local sources are saying has been prevented from falling for the last six months by the El Niño effect 4,000 miles west of here in the Pacific Ocean.

Yet if El Niño is providing

the right conditions, historically, the policy of playing two specialist spinners has not worked well for England in the Caribbean. Apart from the victory at Port of Spain in 1974 where England played three spinners (incidentally, the last time England won a series here) the last three occasions - the first Test in 1981 and the second and third of the 1986 tour - all resulted in heavy losses.

Atherton, despite his degree in history, prefers lateral to chronological thinking, however, citing Australia and India's recent use of a two pacemen and two spinner Test attack. "There are plenty of precedents, but the conditions have to be right," the England captain said yesterday.

Certainly, going into an important Test with two pace bowlers is not for the faint-hearted, and the pitch will need to turn sooner rather than later, and not go low, if the player is not to backfire. Yet Atherton is adamant that it is an option rather than a gamble, despite the small boundaries and fast outfield of the Bourda.

"We have spinners who can bowl long spells and two spinners who bowled well together in tandem during the game against Guyana," claimed Atherton. "They just have to be prepared for a fair bit of work."

Fitness, under their consultant Dean Riddle, will certainly play a role. But if those like Croft, who have not been playing much, will benefit from the

extra training, a workhorse like Angus Fraser knows an enormous workload lies ahead, despite the supposed support offered by Ramprakash's off-spin and Butcher's medium pace.

For Ramprakash, the disappointments of being overlooked at the start of the tour have vanished in the space of a single innings. With John Crawley out of touch, Ramprakash knew a decent score in the last match might secure him the Test place he last filled at The Oval in August.

"It's happened very quickly," said the Middlesex captain, whose 77 against Guyana, a sur-

perbly crafted innings on a turning pitch, helped win him the nod. "I deliberately didn't want to hold up my hopes too much in that match. In fact I feel very relaxed and I want to concentrate in that vein," he added.

Ramprakash later admitted he had discussed his tendency to "tighten up" during Tests with the team's sports psychologist, Stephen Bull.

"Although it might seem obvious, Stephen has helped me set the whole thing out and now have a routine of building up to a match that leaves me in a better frame of mind," he said. "Basically, it is about recalling my best innings so that I can re-

lax and enjoy what I'm doing. It's when I play best."

Four years ago Ramprakash was dismissed for scores of two and five in the West Indies' pace harrage wreaked havoc. A repeat may not be out of the question and, while the pitch will offer turns as it wears, the home side's tall fast bowlers could, in the event of a low bounce, end up being more effective than either Carl Hooper or the debutant leg-spinner Dhanan Ramarine, who took five wickets against England for Trinidad three weeks ago.

With Atherton as ambivalent as ever to the milestone awaiting him - he actually considers

it his 49th Test, preferring not to count the abandoned game in Jamaica - another should not go unheralded.

Courtney Walsh, who made his Test debut on the 1984/85 tour of Australia, has, undoubtedly, been one of the West Indies' greatest servants. In fact, for a fast bowler to notch up a 100 Tests in this day and age requires resilience and dedication beyond most mortals.

In some ways it is an even greater feat of survival than Atherton's, whose captaincy needs the momentum of a Test win here if his duck of winning a five-match series is to be broken before the millennium.

ENGLAND (v West Indies, fourth Test, Georgetown, today): M.Atherton (capt), A.J.Stewart, M.A.Butcher, N.Hussey, G.P.Thorp, M.R.Ramprakash, R.C.Russell (wkt), D.I.Croft, A.R.Caddick, D.W.Headley, A.R.C.Fraser, P.D.Turner.

Azhar's field day, page 29

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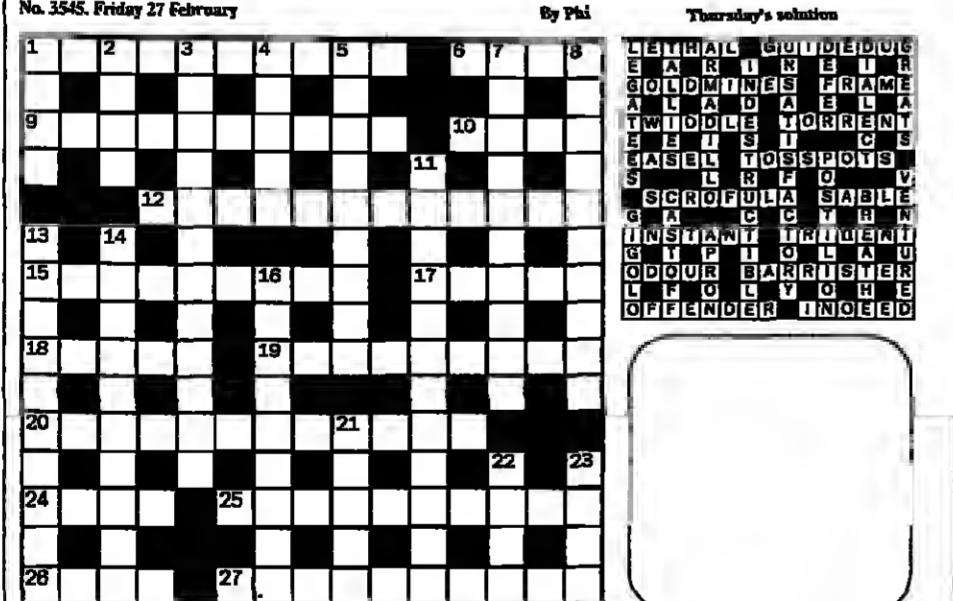
Friday 27 February 1998 Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3545. Friday 27 February

By Phi

Tuesday's solution



ACROSS
1 Hole in fence will do for thief (10)
6 Have a look at second prison (4)
9 Awkward retailer stocking Trade Union bumph (10)
10 Move stealthily, covering back and front (4)
12 The way a rag simply spreads the dirt? (6,6)
15 King enters without fear, perhaps, showing no signs of wounds (9)
17 "Knob" not on level land, primarily? (5)
18 Bury's main terminus demolished at both ends (5)
19 Former pupil having perf. infatuation (9)
20 How to make Brian a dis-organised person (12)

DOWN
1 Run and hide (4)
2 Reduced amount of drug? That's smart! (4)
3 A welcome figure as opera grant is redistributed (7,5)
4 Gives example of one leaving town? (5)
5 Unexpectedly, I side with pure Greek dramatist (9)
7 Nothing in can or cup I rattled - this contains far more (10)

Vickery citing scuppered by 'failure to follow procedure'

Rugby Union

By Chris Hewett

THE great and good of the Five Nations committee yesterday scrapped the 30-day suspension imposed on the England prop, Phil Vickery, who was cited by the Welsh management for punching during last weekend's international at Twickenham.

The volte-face left Vickery free to resume playing immediately and left the rest of Europe wondering how so many Englishmen manage to avoid carrying the can for their transgressions.

Vickery, the 21-year-old tight head from Gloucester, is the latest in an illustrious line of England forwards to escape justice for alleged violent conduct. Tim Rodber played in the 1994 Cape Town Test against the Springboks despite having been sent off for his part in an unholly dust-up with Eastern Province a mere four days earlier. Some 20 months later, Jason Leonard was accused by the Scots of inflicting a brutal punch on Rob Wainwright during a Calcutta Cup match at Murrayfield, but was cleared in the light of inconclusive video evidence.

However, Vickery's good fortune in escaping censure for thumping Colin Charvis, the

Swansea flanker, during the second half of Saturday's international had nothing to do with the quality of the film footage or, even, the legitimacy of an appeal passionately supported by both Clive Woodward, the England coach, and Roy Manock, the Rugby Football Union's disciplinary officer.

Astonishingly, the Five Nations committee members did not consider whether or not Vickery was guilty of landing the punch. Neither did they consider whether Peter Boyle, the match commissioner from Ireland, was correct in imposing a one-month sentence for an offence that would have earned the perpetrator nothing more than a yellow card had he been dealt with by the referee.

According to Roger Pickering, the Five Nations chief executive, the committee reversed Boyle's decision purely on procedural grounds. "The citing procedure was not followed to the letter," said Pickering.

"There were misunderstandings between people who I have no intention of naming and as a result of the legal advice obtained by the committee, the suspension was deemed unsafe."

In other words, a cock-up. While Pickering insisted that there was nothing legally

unsound about the citing procedures if properly applied, the system is now so discredited that Woodward and the rest of the England hierarchy are pushing the International Board to sanction an immediate review of disciplinary policy. "The current situation is ludicrously inconsistent," said the coach. "In my opinion, a player should be cited only if he deserves to be sent from the field."

Those Englishmen glorying in the fact that the hapless Welsh could not even manage a proper citing, let alone pick a winning team, were given further comic sustenance yesterday when the Dragons management decided to put their squad in purdah during the run-up to next weekend's match with Scotland. Last week, the Welsh players were publicly predicting their first Twickenham victory since 1988. On 60-point thrashing later, they have effectively been gagged.

Neil Jenkins, the world-class goal-kicker who suffered every imaginable indignity at the hands of the English, did have a word or two for public consumption, however. "I never want to play full-back again," he said after confirming to Kevin Bowring, the Welsh coach, that he wanted to be considered only as an outside-half.

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